CONFERENCE REPORT

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

WESTERN NWT

Working Towards Consensus

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STEERING COMMITTEE

January 18 - 22, 1995 • Yellowknife, NWT

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CONFERENCE REPORT

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

WESTERN NWT

MARCH 1994

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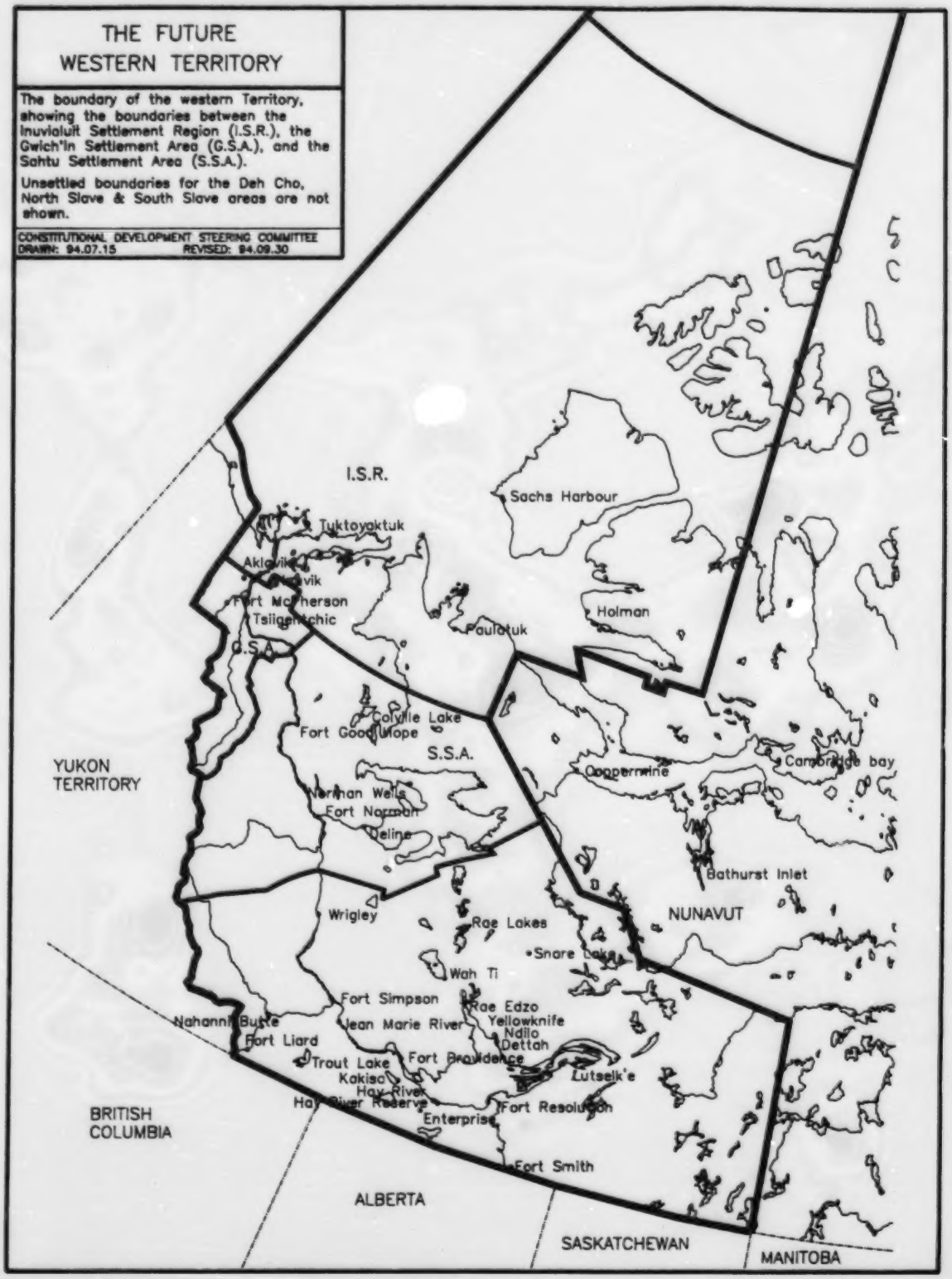


FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE WESTERN NWT

Conference Report

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

January 18 - 22, 1995

Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NWT

Introduction

On April 1, 1999, the NWT as we now know it, will cease to exist. On that date, two new territories, Nunavut in the east and a new western territory, will be created. The new western territory does not yet have a name.

Nunavut has already developed a constitution - the Nunavut Act. If the western part of the NWT does nothing, on April 1, 1999, the same NWT Act will apply - but Nunavut will be removed.

Recognizing an opportunity to create a new form of government that captures both the spirit and vision of our lands and peoples, the Constitutional Development Steering Committee (CDSC) invited 150 residents from across the western NWT to meet in Yellowknife and discuss the development of a new constitution. This is the report of the western territory's First Constitutional Conference - "*Working Towards Consensus.*"

Conference Lead Up

Work on a new constitutional arrangement in the NWT began in the 1980's by the *Constitutional Alliance*, a body of the *Western Constitutional Forum* and the *Nunavut Constitutional Forum*. In 1987, their work resulted in an agreement to divide the NWT into two territories - the *Iqaluit Agreement*. Following a plebiscite on the issue in 1992, the Prime Minister and representatives of the Inuit of Nunavut signed the *Nunavut Final Land Claims Agreement*, which resulted in legislation creating a new Nunavut Territory in 1999 through the division of the NWT.

In March, 1991, a committee of western MLAs and leaders of various aboriginal groups was formed. This committee set in motion the *Bourque Commission*, which presented its report in April of 1992. The committee later expanded to include the elected leaders of seven aboriginal organizations, the 14 western MLAs, three mayors from the tax-based municipalities, and one representative chosen by the Native Women's Association of the NWT and the NWT Status of Women Council. This group became the Constitutional Development Steering Committee (CDSC).

The CDSC, which operates independently of government, has taken on the task of guiding constitutional development in the western NWT.

In 1993, the CDSC arranged for funding from the GNWT so CDSC member groups could produce a set of research reports setting out their desires regarding constitutional reform. With added funding from the GNWT and the federal government, the CDSC organized community information meetings to prepare for a constitutional conference The reports produced earlier by CDSC member groups served as a starting point for discussions at the *First Constitutional Conference*.

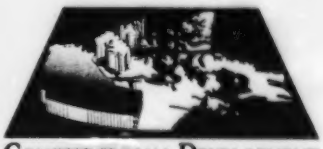
The CDSC organized the *First Constitutional Conference* to bring together people from all 34 western NWT communities to discuss their ideas, discover areas of common ground, explore differences of opinion and identify where there is more work to do.

About the Participants

The conference participant selection process attempted to balance representation of elected political leaders with members of the general public, aboriginal with non-aboriginal residents, and men and women. A number of youth and elders were also invited to participate.

In inviting participants to the conference, the CDSC was guided by the principle that the largest practical number of participants - representing all communities and regions of the western NWT - should attend.

The CDSC decided that half of the 150 conference participants should be elected political leaders, and the other half should be non-elected members of the public. The chart on the next page shows more precisely where participants came from and what organizations selected them.



CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

The First Constitutional Conference was sponsored by the Constitutional Development Steering Committee (CDSC).

The Constitutional Development Steering Committee (CDSC) has 23 members representing eight different groups. Five members represent the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Metis and Dogrib. One member represents the Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council. Three members represent the tax-based municipalities. The remaining 14 seats are filled by the MLAs of the Western Caucus of the NWT.

Two other aboriginal organizations representing the Dene - the Deh Cho and the NWT Treaty 8 Tribal Councils, have not accepted membership on the CDSC. They did, however, participate in the conference as observers.

Conference Objectives

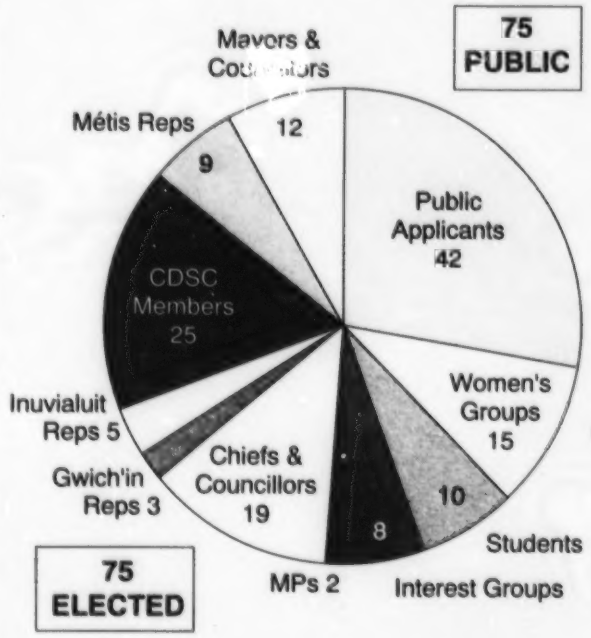
The objectives of the conference were two-fold:

(1) To make recommendations on principles & options for a constitution and a structure of government for the new western territory;

(2) To make recommendations on how the western constitutional process should continue.

The conference was designed to move the process of constitutional development one step closer towards a consensus on a new western NWT constitution. Participants were not asked to make any final decisions, but were asked to discuss various issues to see where there were areas of agreement, and then to look at any differences to see where more work needs to be done. Participants were also asked to make recommendations on how the next step in process should be handled, including consideration of a second conference.

Break Down of Conference Participants...



SOURCE: CDSC: Conference Background Materials

To obtain additional copies of this report or for more information on the development of a new constitution for the western NWT, phone or contact:

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The CDSC gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories to the constitutional process for a new western territory.

The opening plenary session began with a prayer. Chief Darrell Beaulieu of the N'dilo Yellowknives Dene welcomed participants and delivered the Treaty 8 position statement (see pg. 12 for complete transcript). Deh Cho Elder Daniel Sonfrere was the first of several speakers to make opening remarks. Here is what they said.

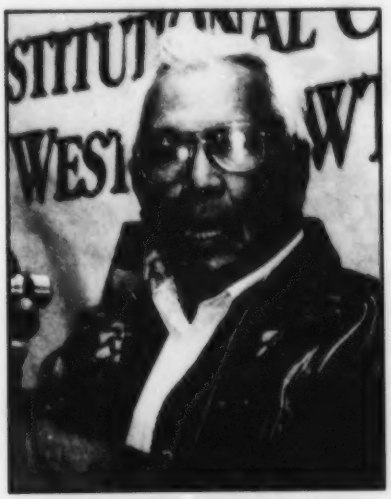
Deh Cho Elder DANIEL SONFRERE

I am pleased to have arrived here today to address you, the people assembled here. The elders among you, the youth among you, and you that I am here to talk with, thank you.

What is there for me to tell you about? You all work at many things in the world and you also help each other with many of these things.

We, the aboriginal people of this land, the people who have existed on this land before the non-native people, have gone through many hardships. We the aboriginal people might look pitiful, but we are decendents of our relatives, who have gone through extreme difficulties. When our ancestors had discussions and when they wanted things done they helped each other. They helped each other very well on this land. That is how our people existed before the non-natives.

It is with the coming of the treaties that the non-native people and the native people became neighbours for the first time on this land. As elders, we feel that, the agreements made back then has had a good existence for a long long time. We didn't make use of all that we wanted, but we didn't fight with each other, we helped one another.



Daniel Sonfrere, Deh Cho elder

As things look today, we the elders, who look after the land for our youth and our people, don't want massive and complicated changes to make its presence in our land yet. We don't want this yet. In the future years when the youth become individuals that know themselves as aboriginal people, when they are educated, when they know how to speak for their land and their people and when they know how to speak to the government and when these people are in place throughout the land, it will be the youth that take over. Up until then things are still going well at present.

When we look at the number of people assembled here and we really think about it, we find there is a lot of confusion. There are a lot of young people who are confused.

If there are a lot of confused young people, and added to this, if we don't assist each other, there will be further confusion among the youth. We have to help each other to resolve this. The ways in which the youth are going to exist and relate to each other on this land in the future is something we have to look at very carefully.

Back since the treaty was settled, things have gone quite well for a long period of time, and in relation to the Creator's words, things have gone quite well on this land. When we look at the future of our youth we can not ignore this. We have to also look at the spiritual life for the future, that's how things will improve for the youth living on this land.

We here today, if we don't help each other and plan for the future of our land, our land is going to become pitiful and when its resources are gone and it becomes pitiful we will also become pitiful.

That is why, I wish all present here the best of luck until you return home to your land. Especially the elders and the leaders that are from the far south. Be good neighbours, be of good intentions with each other and have a good meeting until you depart from this conference.

Again, if we don't help one another to plan for the future of our youth, they are going to experience great difficulties. For this reaosn let us help each other so that we can all be good neighbours, good luck.

Thank you.

FRED KOE, Chair, CDSC

I'd like to thank Chief Sangris for the prayer and Chief Beaulieu for the Treaty 8 position statement.

I'd like to again welcome all the participants from across the Western Arctic, all the visitors, the observers, members of all the organizations that are here today, and those listening to us across the Northwest Territories and across Canada. I think today is another historical moment in time in the Northwest Territories in its political evolution. The process that we've been working towards has taken about two years to come to this point and this stage where we're hosting this conference today. It has not been an easy road, it has not - there are many different groups in the Western Arctic, many different groups across the Northwest Territories, and today we're all gathered here to meet and share ideas and principles on how we wish to continue the development of the new western territory. As we're all aware, on April 1st, 1999, division of the Northwest Territories is going to occur. The Nunavut Act comes into effect, which creates the new territory, Nunavut Territory, which means that the balance of what we now know as the Northwest Territories is the area we are talking about today, a western territory.

Some of our objectives in meeting this week are to try to make some recommendations on the principles

and options for the development of a constitution and a structure of government for this new western territory. We also hope to talk about how this process of developing a western territory and the rules to govern it, or the constitution, should continue. This process has been sponsored by the Constitutional Development Steering Committee. This committee is made up of the Aboriginal leaders from across the western territory, the 14 western MLA's, and also representatives from the tax based municipalities and a representative - joint representative of the Native Women's organization and the N.W.T. Status of Women Council.

Work on development of a constitution for the west really began in the 1980's as part of the Constitutional Alliance. And that resulted in a boundary constitutional agreement in 1987. This agreement was for the implementation of division of the Northwest Territories between the Western Constitutional Forum and the Nunavut Constitutional Forum, and it was called the Iqaluit Agreement. Following that there was the Bourque Commission Report.

The steering committee has taken on the task of guiding this process of constitutional development in the western territory. It's a registered society and operates independently

CDSC Chair, Fred Koe

from both the federal and territorial governments, although our funding comes from both sources. Our job is to try to help bring the people of the western Northwest Territories through the next stages in the constitutional process. In 1993, the CDSC arranged funding from the government of the Northwest Territories so that the member group research work could be done and written in the reports that you have. The summarized contents of those reports form the starting point for discussion at this first constitutional conference. We then secured additional funding from both the government of Canada and government of the Northwest Territories and organized the community information meetings and funded the political organizations to prepare for this conference. We went to almost all the 34 western communities and had meetings with people to get their ideas and to start the process of selecting participants to come to this meeting.

I think our challenge today is to help to try and build a consensus on a constitution and a structure of government that we can all live with, one that we can afford, and one that truly reflects all our peoples. It is the CDSC's hope that the work done at this conference will take us one step further towards achieving consensus on a constitution and a new system of government for the western Northwest Territories.

We don't have to achieve full agreement at this conference. The intention is that after this conference, there will be further consultation and negotiations about areas where there are differences and where there is further work to do. Then hopefully we can follow this up with a second constitutional conference sometime later in the year. That conference would give more specific direction on what should be included in the constitution and we can start the planning to begin the writing of such a document.

Although we have been discussing constitutional development for a long time, it must be emphasized that we are still early in the process of actually deciding what will be in the constitution. Participants at this

Timeline...

1980s

Western Constitutional Forum and the Nunavut Constitutional Forum form the NWT Constitutional Alliance, and finalize the Iqaluit Agreement.

1991

Committee of Political Leaders is formed, leading to the Bourque Commission and extensive public consultation.

1992

Bourque Report on Constitutional Development published.

1992

CDSC is formed.

1994

Federal & territorial governments fund CDSC.

1994 & 1995

From November to January, CDSC conducts public information & consultation meetings in Western N.W.T. communities.

January 18 - 22, 1995

First Constitutional Conference

1995

- Further public information, research and consultation.
- CDSC prepares options paper
- Regional Mini-Conferences in November and December

1996-1999

- Second Constitutional Conference
- Writing & refining of a draft constitution.
- Ratification vote of proposed constitution by plebiscite.
- Enactment of federal legislation.
- Western Implementation Commission to guide new system of government into place.

April 1, 1999
Division of NWT

conference will not be asked to make any final decisions. We hope that you will discuss the issues to see that there are already areas of agreement and as was expressed today, areas of disagreement. There are many different positions, and your research reports that you will use as working documents will show that.

We also have to decide whether or not this is the proper process to follow in developing a constitution. So hopefully by Sunday afternoon, there will be some agreement or disagreement on whether to continue this process or work on another process.

Conference Chair: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

Our former prime minister, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, was invited by the CDSC to serve as the conference chairperson.

Following his introduction at the opening plenary, Mr. Clark offered several comments to participants making special note of the uniqueness of the western NWT constitutional process. "It is a process unlike any other you will find," said Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark added that this first conference would be successful only if participants were willing to work together. "It is important to recognize that we will only succeed if we respect one another and work together," he said.

Mr. Clark pointed out that this first conference was neither the beginning of the constitutional development process, nor the end. Rather, it is another stop along the way. As such, Mr. Clark cautioned participants on the need to arrive at a consensus on the issues. "There is no value at all in an artificial agreement," he said. "Artificial agreement will not pass the test."

Rather, Mr. Clark urged participants to draw out areas where there is real agreement. Likewise, he advised participants to point out the specific areas on which there is disagreement.

Mr. Clark added that constitutional reform in the western territory is currently being driven by outside forces - the creation of the Nunavut Territory, treaty discussions and land claim developments. "But, the question is, will we decide, or will others?" he asked.

In closing, the former prime minister asked conference participants for their assistance in his role as the chair. "Please give me your guidance, your cooperation and your trust," he said.

Rt. Hon. Joe Clark giving summary overview at a conference plenary.

Premier Nellie Cournoyea: Address to Conference

On behalf of the government, I would like to compliment the Constitutional Development Steering Committee for taking the initiative to develop a constitution for a new western territory. The Northwest Territories has always been a place for new ideas and new visions. I am confident the people in this room have the ability to outline a framework for public government that respects aboriginal claim settlements, self government agreements and the constitutional desires of all northern people.

Resolution of political and constitutional issues will provide northern people with a greater degree of confidence and an ability to exercise the kind of strong leadership and accountability needed to meet the changing needs of the Northwest Territories. It will create stability and an improved climate for the economic investment and development needed to make the Territories more self-sufficient, independent and less reliant on the federal government.

As a government, we have made a commitment to self-government and greater control at the community level so existing or new government programs and services can be controlled and managed by the people they serve.

While some progress has been made during the past few years, there are still many challenges to be met. Our ability to continue making progress largely depends on developing a common vision that is shared by governments, aboriginal organizations and residents of the Northwest Territories.

As you know, an enormous agenda for political and constitutional change involving a large number of groups with different perspectives, is being discussed and negotiated in the Northwest Territories. The Nunavut Implementation Commission, with full cooperation from Canada and the Northwest Territories, is progressing towards its first report on the creation of a Nunavut Territory and government by April of 1999. In addition, both governments have

begun talks on self government with a number of aboriginal groups in the western territory including the Metis, in the South and North Slave regions, who are preparing proposals on how they would like to approach matters of interest to their people in these regions.

Stability and common purpose will be needed to meet the challenges presented by constitutional and political reform. The territorial government is particularly anxious to have a greater degree of certainty on such complex issues as the financing of division, the settlement of land claims, implementation and negotiation of self government and the process of devolution.

The government is also concerned that various statements regarding self-government and treaty land entitlement in the western Northwest Territories have, on occasion, meant different things to different people and are creating a wide-range of expectations. The need for Ottawa to outline its position on a number of matters, within the context of today's fiscal reality and pressures to cut spending, has been discussed during the joint strategy sessions involving all members of the Legislative Assembly.

Premier Nellie Cournoyea

As a result of the discussions, Mr. Irwin indicated he was prepared to make a statement that would set out broad principles and provide clarification of federal policies as they relate to political and constitutional developments in the Northwest Territories. I am pleased the minister is with us today. It is important for all of us to have a clear understanding of federal positions on public and aboriginal self government, devolution and division as we move towards development of a constitution for the western territory and the formation of a Nunavut government.

The need for a common vision and realistic expectations is extremely important particularly because of federal program and budget reductions. Signals from Ottawa concerning Finance Minister Paul Martin's budget statement have been clear. There will be more cuts in federal spending and transfer payments and there is a strong possibility of increased taxes. The Northwest Territories will not be able to escape the impact. Ottawa already contributes nearly a billion dollars each year to help pay for territorial government programs and services. Although we haven't completed negotiations on a new funding arrangement, we will be fortunate to maintain our existing budget level because of the financial position of the federal government. That means decisions made today must be affordable tomorrow. As a result, we cannot be fragmented in our approach to political and constitutional development.

Money spent on establishing and operating a new public government for the western Territories must be spent smartly. Resources must be used to provide programs and services to those who need them the most. The Territories can't afford expensive bureaucracies, delivery systems, too many government departments and too many committees. It is important for leadership in the Territories to recognize this reality and to demonstrate a commitment towards working together to prepare for the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. We need to be clear, determined and united in order to be strong, efficient and responsive. This is a time for leadership and for practical solutions that everyone can understand. Individual interests are important, but they must be advanced in a manner that serves a common goal. That's what this conference is all about. I am looking forward to participating in the development of a form of government that is made in the Territories and serves the best interests of all northern people.

Hon. Ronald Irwin, Minister of DIAND: Speech of Conference

At the opening plenary on January 18, the Hon. Ronald Irwin, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, addressed conference participants. What follows is an edited transcript of his remarks:

First off, I want to say this - and they told me to stay to the scripts but I'm terrible at not staying to scripts - because it's important. It is a distinct pleasure having the former Prime Minister here. I don't want to embarrass him but I was his adversary and I had sat with him - opposite him - for four and a half years. You can gauge a person by how they react under fire and I think that we are lucky to have him here because he is a man who has always put the people's interests first, many times to his detriment, and always Canada first.

It is important that you, the Elders, the Chiefs, Premier, Chairman, participants and the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, come out of this conference with a message. I am telling you straight out that a message coming from this group, all of whom I respect, is going to be significant and is going to be listened to. Otherwise, we have wasted a million dollars - your time and my time. None of us want that.

This is my fourth time here, and I appreciate the opportunity of meeting with the mayors and the community leaders and members of the general public. Each time I come here, I go away with a better feeling. The first time was with my wife and it gave me an insight of what this country is about - seeing the north and going back to my territory in Sault St. Marie with a better feeling.

This is an extraordinary part of our country. Extraordinary in its challenges, extraordinary in its opportunities, extraordinary in its achievements of the people and always the people who live here. Now, as we work towards the creation of Nunavut in the Eastern portion of the Territory by April 1, 1999 - Why they chose April Fool's Day is beyond me. Is that a western joke that you pulled on the Eastern Arctic? - there are extraordinary challenges to adapt your constitution, your government, your practices, the changing needs of the 1990's and the 21st century.

Conference Agenda...

Wednesday, January 18:

1:00 pm - 2:15 pm	*Opening Plenary*: Opening Prayer, Chiefs Darrell Beaulieu and Jonas Sangris; Welcoming Remarks and Conference Procedure Overview, CDSC Chairperson Fred Koe; Keynote Speech, Elder Daniel Sonfrere
2:30 pm - 2:40 pm	Address to Participants: *Hon. Nellie Cournoyea, Premier*
2:40 pm - 3:15 pm	Address to Participants: *Hon. Ronald A. Irwin, Minister, DIAND*
3:15 pm- 3:20 pm	Introduction of and Opening Remarks by Conference Chair: *Rt. Hon. Joe Clark*
3:30 pm - 5:00 pm	*Working Group Session #1*: Conference Orientation
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Banquet & CDSC Member Group Presentations

Thursday, January 19:

8:30 am - 9:15 am	*Plenary*: Overview of Constitutional Processes: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark
9:30 am - 11:30 am	*Working Group Session #2*: Constitutional Process
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	*Plenary*: Working Group Reports on Constitutional Process
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	*Plenary*: Overview of Founding Principles. Rt. Hon. Joe Clark
3:15 pm - 5:15 pm	*Working Group Session #3*: Founding Principles
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	*Plenary*: Working Group Reports on Founding Principles: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

Friday, January 20:

8:45 am - 9:30 am	*Plenary*: Overview of Government Structures/Division of Powers: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark
9:45 am - 12:45 pm	*Working Group Session #4*: Government Structures & Division of Powers
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm	*Working Group Session #4*: Continued
4:45 pm - 6:30 pm	*Plenary*: Working Group Reports on Government Structures & Division of Powers
7:00 pm	Participant Dinner hosted by City of Yellowknife

Saturday, January 21:

8:45 am - 9:15 am	*Plenary*: Overview of Political Representation: Rt Hon. Joe Clark
9:30 am - 11:30 am	*Working Group Session #5*: Representation
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	*Plenary*: Working Group Reports on Representation
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	*Plenary*: Overview of Continuing the Constitutional Process: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark
3:15 pm - 5:15 pm	*Working Group Session #6*: Continuing the Constitutional Process
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	*Plenary*: Working Group Reports on Continuing the Constitutional Process

Sunday, January 22:

9:00 am - 12:00 pm	*Concluding Plenary*: Conference Overview: Rt. Hon. Joe Clark & Closing Prayer

As I said, my wife and I were here when they opened the assembly with Prime Minister Chrétien in November 1993, and he spoke to the assembly and proudly recalled his long association with the North. When he was Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Prime Minister Chrétien began the process of seeking agreement among residents on how to structure a territorial government to meet the needs of northerners. Let me be clear of this, I am not here with a policy, I am not here with a Red Book. I am here with John Chrétien's life long commitment. My mandate is simple - implement his commitment to the North.

Nineteen seventy-two does not seem that long ago. We spoke to a former council of the NWT to promote the challenges facing the North. He said, "The main tasks remain with you. We have to show the world." It is so important nowadays when you see this happening in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Here you have eight official languages - five more than the UN. I think we can show the world that it is possible for all of us to live together with our differences, but at the same time, to share together.

There are many challenges, and the northerners have responded to these challenges and the rest of the country is paying attention. The continuing efforts, as well as the efforts of everyone at this conference, will contribute to ensuring a meaningful future for the North, not just in terms of political and constitutional development, but also in creating a climate for generating jobs and economic development.

Hon. Ronald Irwin

"Here you have eight official languages - five more than the U.N. I think we can show the world that it is possible for all of us to live together..."

We have been through this. A constitution is a piece of paper, but a country is a frame of mind and we have to have that frame of mind. We can sign all the documents, but if we don't trust each other, we can't do these things. We have to start with trust and dignity at the top of the pyramid and together we can do these things.

Make no mistake, people are paying attention. The commitment of the new federal government to the North is very strong. This is evident in such recent accomplishments as the appointment of Mary Simon, Canada's first Circumpolar Ambassador; Helen Magasak, the newly appointed NWT Commissioner, the first Inuk and the first woman to be appointed to this position; and my good friend Nellie Cournoyea, the first woman aboriginal Premier of any Canadian jurisdiction.

I want to talk about the creation of two new Territories. Nunavut and your western territory, and more particularly, the exciting opportunity you have in shaping your new structures of government. It is exciting. There is nobody else. No sovereign over in England. There is just you and me. These are exciting times. I mean, there is no one out there besides us. If we do not do it, do not expect someone else to come in and do it. If we do not do it, that is it.

We are ordinary people - all of us - and we will do extraordinary things. I know you are ready to face the challenge, I am proud to stand with you in achieving your goals. In building this unique and prosperous Territory, you have the ability to create government structures that harmonize diverse regional interests with the need of efficient, effective, economical provision of public services.

Here in the western territory, the Government of Canada supports, as does the Government of the Northwest Territories, the concept of one territorial government. A government which reflects the relationship among aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents. It is my belief, and that of the Government of Canada, that a single territorial government in the west is the way to ensure effective government.

Do not get this statement wrong. This does not take away from inherent right, or treaty or what we are doing in the regions. But we have to fit together as a country. We can't have 200 separate countries in Canada. We might as well shake hands and go away right now. We live together. We exercise jurisdictions together. We can do it with a strong centre, whether it is public government or regional government or inherent right or treaty.

Treaty, to me, is sacred by the way. We always treat treaty with spirit and intent. Why else would you sign a treaty if you are not at some time prepared to deal with it - with the spirit of intent?

This type of arrangement makes sense for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it will help to ensure that the citizens of the Western Arctic will continue to have a strong voice in national affairs. You have to have a strong voice, or you will not be listened to. You have to come together. You have to have that strong

voice so the whole country knows it.

Secondly, you will help to create a positive climate for economic growth, as well as contribute to effective land and resource management. For example, although you may live in different areas, many of you share a common interest. You would not be here if you did not.

Of course, there are financial considerations. In essence, a strong territorial government will help ensure that all residents of the western territory have the opportunity to receive the same high quality of programs and services. That is important.

Twenty-five years ago, we talked about education, and there were only 600 aboriginal people in post secondary education in Canada. Today, there are 22,000 aboriginal people in post secondary schools. Next year there will be 23,800. There are 150,000 aboriginal graduates in Canada. And those services are important. The tools are there. Those are the tools to the future. We have to provide those services. We have a common interest in making sure those services are there.

A single territorial government does not mean that people cannot have control over regional or local interests. I support decentralization when it is consistent with good government and fiscal responsibility. We must be flexible. We are reacting to aboriginal and other people's concerns about the benefits of local control over local issues. At the same time, given fiscal realities, we simply cannot create a proliferation of independent government structures. We have to come together at some point.

In the end, you will play a major role in determining how powers and responsibilities are to be divided among territorial, community and regionally governed institutions. You will do so in debate, amongst yourselves, as residents of the future western territory.

"Here in the western territory, the Government of Canada supports, as does the Government of the Northwest Territories, the concept of one territorial government...[but]... do not get this statement wrong. This does not take away from inherent right or treaty..."

It is important to realize that the mandate of the Red Book is that I am to proceed at your speed and you are to give me the direction. But I am ready to move, so let me know the direction you want to go. I am prepared to move. We are doing it across the country. Contemporary treaties are now going in British Columbia. In Saskatchewan, next month, we are looking at seven areas of local management. Manitoba is being dismantled, the whole ministry, plus the other ministries. Now they are dealing with the provinces. Tonight I go to Treaty 3, the meeting with NAN in Ontario. We are doing MOUs in the Treaty 6 area. We are negotiating the Murray Treaty with the Iroquois. We have turned over education jurisdiction to the Micmacs in Nova Scotia where they will decide their curriculum and their teachers' certification. They will decide the type of education they want.

There has to be a North of 60 cultural component to this. Every group is different and this is very important, but they are moving. It is not easy for any of them. It is not easy for the Mohawks to come to the Mohawk Round Table and work. It is not easy for the James Bay Cree to work constructively. But throughout this country, chiefs and leaders are coming and saying, "We want to do it - we know it's not easy, but we will be there and we will negotiate." Now you say, "It is not important to me." But it is important to you because every failure by any aboriginal group in Canada is your failure or my failure. Every success is our success. We can learn from what they are going through. I want the NWT to move. I don't want the NWT pulling up the rear. I want the NWT to be in the lead where it should be.

"A single territorial government does not mean that people cannot have control over regional or local interests."

In light of northern political development over the past decade, the transfer of the remaining provincial-type responsibilities to the territories continues to be a high federal priority. The time is right to conclude the business of devolution. We have to do it. You have to be masters in your own home.

In this regard, I have asked Bob Wright, a leading lawyer and businessman to assist and provide advice to me on devolution of the remaining provincial-like programs of my department to the territorial government. I realize there are concerns over devolution in some centres, but I think that if we come with respect and dignity and listen to each other, we can resolve these things. We have to resolve these things. As I said before, there's only us.

I want to assure you that aboriginal groups will be able to participate in discussions on devolution. Furthermore, I will ensure that aboriginal and treaty rights are fully protected - fully protected throughout the process. Devolution will not inhibit the federal capacity to negotiate and implement aboriginal claims or treaty land entitlements.

The aboriginal treaty rights are protected under the Constitution. In fact, devolution is an opportunity for aboriginal groups to become more involved in their government. Just as

aboriginal people must participate in devolution - or it won't work - it must also benefit from that greater participation in both the government and the economy.

I started this job 14 months ago. My mandate was to start implementing self-government. I am convinced that you have to have economic development, good education, good housing and good medical services at the base of this pyramid - at the top of which there is respect and dignity. It is not just enough to be participants. You have to have the benefits of what we are doing.

The inherent right to self-government process will provide aboriginal people with opportunities to build their future. On the basis of many discussions over the past year, we are working to develop a flexible and practical approach to the implementation of the inherent right. In my view, we can make progress by working out practical self-government arrangements. They have to be practical. They have to work. We can't sit around debating how many angels can sit on the head of a pin. They have to work. They have to be in response to your priorities of aboriginal groups and with full and direct involvement of the territorial government at the negotiating table.

As we indicated in our Red Book, we are acting on the premise that the inherent right of self-government is an existing aboriginal treaty right. I was very proud, at my first meeting, to be able to stand up there and say "The inherent right exists. We work on the premise that it does exist. It comes from the Creator". And I had a hard time with that, because especially in mid-Canada, where treaty is sacred, the elders were saying we were taking away from their treaty. I tried all kinds of ways of explaining it by saying, "Well, when you came to negotiate treaty and anybody asked you if you had the authority, say no". They assumed we had the authority. Well, that is the inherent right. You came to the treaty process with the knowledge by the other side that you had that right.

"Devolution will not inhibit the federal capacity to negotiate and implement aboriginal claims or treaty land entitlements."

It was like the Robert Redford movie where the candidate spent the whole hour and a half of the movie getting elected and then he went with his campaign manager into a side room and said, "What do we do now?" It was easier to debate whether it exists or not for the last 10-20 years than to actually come to the point and say, "Okay what does it mean? Let's do it." That is your job. And I will work with you and I will go in the direction that you want to go.

But there are windows. How long can we have this window? You have a Prime Minister who wants to move, you have competent advisers, like the former Prime Minister, you have a government that wants a move in the Territories, you have aboriginal leaders who want to move. I have a parliamentary secretary who is the first Inuit parliamentary secretary. I have a prominent aboriginal women who sits in Cabinet with me and I am so proud to be with. These windows disappear, and we would be fools to not go through the window while it exists.

Five years from now, we may be gone. Who knows what is going to happen to the country, but our government may be gone. These things happen. I hope not, but don't let this window close on you. We are acting on that premise that it exists. I see this all over the country that the time to move is now. We are committed to building a new partnership with aboriginal peoples that is based on trust, mutual respect and participation in the decision-making process.

"The time to move is now. We are committed to building a new partnership with aboriginal peoples that is based on trust, mutual respect and participation in the decision-making process."

The implementation of the inherent right is about political relationships. Elijah Harper explained this to me once. We were up at Red Sucker. He said, "That's what this is all about, Ron. The treaty process is establishing relationships." That's what we're doing - we're establishing relationships. It's about working out new relationships amongst aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments - arrangements that are tailored to meet unique needs.

Self-government arrangements will take many forms based on the diverse historical, legal, cultural and economic circumstances. In other words, it is tailored for you. What happens here may not be the same as what happens with the Mohawks or with the Tlingets or with the Government of Manitoba or the Government of Alberta. It's tailored for you. It has to be for you or it won't work.

The Northwest Territories is unique. I believe self-government arrangements in the North, and in particular the western NWT, will lead to respect and accommodate the distinctive northern historical and political landscape.

In the North, where aboriginal and non-aboriginal people live and work closely together, in general, demographics favour using public government to implement regional and community expressions of self-government. As all residents of the West work towards a new government structure, the aboriginal groups negotiate self-government arrangements, I am confident that a

unique arrangement will emerge that will meet distinct needs of northerners. This conference is evidence of the commitment to harmonizing the interest of all northerners.

The CDSC process provides a great opportunity. It is an opportunity and it's something we have to make work. It's an opportunity for all western NWT residents to help shape their new government. I know that the groups contributing to this exercise have wide ranging views. That doesn't make us weaker. That makes us stronger as a people, when you do have those wide ranging views. If we understand that, that's a beginning. The wide-ranging views are important to a strong country. If we can reach a consensus, then we have met. And I am confident that you will meet your objectives. I'm going away with a good feeling. You know even better than I that you must move quickly to develop an appropriate legislation base for the western territory.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm my convictions:

First, the creation of two new territories - Nunavut and the western territory is a reality that will occur on April 1, 1999. The challenge is to build a government structure for the territories in a cost-effective manner. I'm told every week by Paul Martin that we have to be cost-effective, that we'll respect the wishes and aspirations of all the residents.

Second, a single territorial government in the west is the best means to providing efficient, effective and affordable government services.

Third, under the territorial government, regional government structures may be the avenue to accommodate unique characteristics in northern regions and communities. I support this when it has community acceptance that is in keeping with the fiscal realities we all face.

Fourth, I believe the process of devolution should continue, as it is in the Yukon.

"You know what is important to you. You will define those things. It is your culture, your heritage and your destiny."

Fifth, participation of aboriginal people in building government structures for the western territory is essential. I'll repeat that. The participation of the aboriginal people in building structures for the western territory is essential. If they are not participating, then there will be no process.

Sixth, I believe the Western Constitutional Development Steering Committee process is our best opportunity that I've seen so far to achieve these objectives.

Finally, the inherent right of self-government should find expression primarily through the public government and be implemented in partnership with the federal and territorial governments. This is an exciting time for each and every one of us to contribute.

There was an Inuit long ago - no one passed on his name - but they passed on his poem. It has been translated, probably thousands of years ago:

"Yet there is only one great thing -

the only thing to live, to see in hunts and on journeys -

the great day that dawns and the light that fills the world".

You know what is important to you. You will define those things. It is your culture, your heritage and your destiny.

Northerners are meeting the Prime Minister's challenge by creating these two new territories, and today as you build the government for the western territory, I am confident you will once again arise to his challenge and prove to the world that it is possible to live and share together the differences.

So we are living together - your predecessors for tens of thousands of years - mine, not that long ago. We must come together. We must show the world that we can do these things. We must show the world there is no other country like Canada. It's chance that we arrived here - your ancestors a lot longer than mine. We must show the world not only what we can do, but what we will do.

You have to love your country to do that, and you do, and I do. Don't let this chance go by. It is a once in a lifetime chance. Let's make it work. Let's work together.

Thank you.

Conference participants listen to Mr. Irwin's address at the opening plenary.

NWT Treaty 8 Tribal Council: Statement to the Conference

A statement from the NWT Treaty 8 Tribal Council was read to conference participants at the opening plenary, explaining why they were not participating in the conference:

The Chiefs, Elders and Citizens of the NWT Treaty 8 Tribal Council would like to welcome the delegates to our territory.

When Her Majesty, the Queen, visited our territory last summer, we officially welcomed her as dictated by official protocol. However, at this meeting we were not acknowledged by the Minister of Indian Affairs nor the organizers of this meeting as having an official capacity. We are the Indigenous Peoples of these lands. Common sense and proper protocol would acknowledge our official place at this meeting. However, the Minister of Indian Affairs and other officials would not meet with us nor acknowledge our position vis a vis these lands. Mr. Irwin as the colonial official did not see fit to acknowledge the First Nations of this Territory. He turned down our invitations to meet with the leadership of the Dene Nation, Treaty 8 and Deh Cho.

Unlike the Minister of Indian Affairs, we will follow the protocol of our forefathers and inform this meeting that NWT Treaty 8 First Nations will not participate in this process as this process is a violation of our Treaty. Treaty 8 is an International peace treaty negotiated between two sovereign nations. International law sets out the criteria for entering into Treaties. We complied with those criteria along with the British Crown when the Treaty was entered into and concluded. We are a nation of people. We have our own land base, our own territory, or own language, our own economy, and our own government. We have never ceded, released, surrendered nor sold our lands. Even the colonial Canadian legal system has acknowledged this fact. In the early 1970's, we, the Dene went to court concerning the Treaties entered into with the British Crown. The Paulette case recognized that we are still the legal owners of this land, that we still retain Dene title. The Dene agreed to share our lands with the settlers for settlement. There was no mention of cede, surrender or giving up title to the lands. The Canadian Government knows that the Dene are correct in their understanding of the Treaty or else why would the government insist upon the specific extinguishment language in claims agreements? As we speak, the United Nations is conducting an extensive review of Treaties signed with Indigenous Peoples and have appointed a Special Rapporteur who is reviewing the implementation of our Treaty within International law as stated in Article 3 of the Vienna Convention on Treaties. If the Treaties signed by Indigenous Peoples were not of concern to the International community, why would the United Nations undertake this review? It is obvious to us, and those involved in International law, that our Treaties are international instruments.

Even the state of Canada recognizes the international significance of our Treaty. For example, during the Charlottetown Accord discussions, Deputy Minister Rick Van Loon offered to reopen negotiations with us if we dropped our demand for a veto the N.W.T. becoming a province. The chiefs refused the offer then, and we refuse your offer now. We are not prepared to participate in the continued implementation of the Liberal Government's termination of Indigenous Peoples' rights contained within their 1969 White Paper. Nearly all the policies and programs of termination have been fully implemented in the N.W.T. All that is left to implement is the land recommendations. Encouraging and allowing the participation in these discussions of various groups to speak on behalf of our peoples is done without the CONSENT of the N.W.T. Treaty 8 First Nations. We will not condone persons with no interest in our lands to dictate our future. For instance, the City of Yellowknife has been assigned 12 delegates for this conference, as opposed to the 7 delegates assigned to the NWT Treaty 8 First Nations, the rightful and legitimate government of these lands. If other regions want to accept such a process, we will not stand in their way.

The Chiefs and Citizens of Treaty Eight First Nations, the rightful owners of this land, want to remind

Treaty 8 leaders at the First Constitutional Conference

you that the Bourque Commission was the first phase in constitutional development in the Western N.W.T. The Commission spent $1.7 million getting the people's views. Phase 2 of constitutional development is supposed to discuss the Commission's report, which in fact meant this conference. What has happened to "Working Toward a Common Future"? It was a report issued after extensive community consultations. Do the MLA's not like the Bourque Report? Or are there other parties who do not want to see the Bourque report implemented? Who ever is making the decisions for the North did not like to hear what the communities had to say and have set up this alternative CDSC process. It seems that the MLAs have decided to ignore the Bourque Commission's report. Is that because it advocates regional governments, which would mean less power for the MLAs? One last comment on the Bourque report: on page 19 of the report "The Commission recommends that the New western territory constitution recognize that Aboriginal First Nations may opt out of the New western territory constitutional process and seek a direct link with the federal government." This is our right which we are exercising at this time. Opting out to save our future.

The Council of the Northwest Territories is merely an administrative arm of the Department of Indian Affairs. The Department of Indian Affairs is an internal mechanism of the Federal Government to administer its trust obligations to the Indigenous Peoples. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is supposed to act in protection of the trust, not destroy the relationship through a rather clumsy and ill conceived method of trying to establish a government upon our lands without our consent. The Government of Canada and the GNWT cannot make acts and legislation applicable to us, unless we give our consent. In this case, we do not give our consent to another government being formed which would try to control and to make laws, regulations and policies on our traditional lands. Any discussion about extending a foreign government over our lands will be resisted.

Thank you.

Banquet Presentations

Following the banquet on Wednesday evening, participants listened to a series of presentations. Presentations were made on behalf of various member groups of the CDSC, and include the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Metis and Dogrib peoples, the Native Women's Association and the tax-based municipalities of the NWT. These organizations elaborated on the positions they have advanced in the research reports conducted for the CDSC. Although not a member of the CDSC, the Deh Cho First Nation was also invited to outline for participants their views with regards to a new western territorial constitution. What follows are edited transcripts of these seven presentations:

George Cleary:

Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is George Cleary and I am the president of the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated and also president of the Sahtu Dene Council, and I speak to you tonight as a representative of the Sahtu aboriginal governments. I have to make that clear. We like to make this clear distinction when we sit across the table with the federal government and the territorial government - that myself and other Sahtu representatives speak on behalf of Sahtu aboriginal governments.

The Sahtu had two regional meetings to fine tune our position on first, what would be the best government for the Sahtu, and second, to develop positions on the five major themes of this conference. The meetings that we had were on December 20 and 21st in Deline, in Fort Norman on January 4 to 6. We come out with a position on these two topics.

Our foremost fundamental position is that self-government is the senior process. We feel that it is the most important process for the Sahtu Dene and Metis people. And when we talked about what would be the best government for the Sahtu, we have developed the position that we need to have a strong regional government that can best meet the needs of the Sahtu people on a regional level as well as at the community level. I will go through some of the principles that we have developed. These will be distributed tomorrow, so no one needs to take any notes.

The first set of principles is on process. The first one is that Sahtu Dene and Metis support the constitutional process of developing a new western arctic constitution. However, we reserve the right to opt out of the CDSC process and to seek a direct link with the federal government.

What we are saying is that we support this process, but at the same time, we have a constitutional right to negotiate self-government arrangements directly with the federal government. We reject Minister Irwin's statement this afternoon when he said that the "inherent right to self-government can only be negotiated within the context of public government." Our position is that the Minister is absolutely wrong on this issue. He has forgotten his obligation that he has to the Sahtu Dene and Metis. He has to negotiate self-government arrangements with us. I think the only way that Sahtu self-

government can come under the context of public government is if, and only if, we agree to it. So we think that the Minister is absolutely wrong on this on his position.

It's funny because it seems there is a federal policy that there is inherent right to self-government - it's out there. But north of sixty, it is a conditional inherent right to self-government. It just doesn't make any sense to us at all.

The rest of the principles we have agreement on is that the CDSC process and aboriginal self-government process are mutually exclusive, yet dependent upon each other.

The next point: Any draft constitution developed through the CDSC process must first be reviewed by the Sahtu communities. The communities have not been involved sufficiently to date in the constitutional development process, and more community involvement is required because in the end, it is the communities that must drive the process. There needs to be a lot more community consultations and meetings after this conference.

There are other principles that we agreed to under the second theme of "principles" and I'll just read a couple of them out because they are relevant for what I want to say tonight.

George Cleary
President, Sahtu Secretariat Inc.

One of the points is that whatever agreements are made on rights, powers and benefits through negotiations with the federal government, will have to be recognized, protected and accommodated in the new western arctic constitution. We are saying that any self-government negotiations, any agreements that we reach, have to be recognized and protected under the new constitution. We have to recognize the rights of communities as primary governing bodies and authorities.

I'll go on to the third theme which is structures. I am trying to go as fast as I can, but as I said earlier, we are going to make this document public and available to everybody. There are three principles that we have agreed to on structures. I will go through them:

First, the structure and mandate of community government must be determined by the people in each community. Second, the public government in the new western territory will receive its primary authority by delegation from aboriginal, community and regional governments. Third, a government structure in each region will be determined through self-government negotiations with the federal government and be recognized and confirmed in the new western arctic constitution.

Under powers, I will just state the principles. There are three that we are really advocating. First, no further devolution of powers from the federal government to the Government of the Northwest Territories until agreement is reached on a constitutional framework and aboriginal self-government arrangements in the Sahtu.

Second, If devolution does occur before the present constitutional development process is completed and a self-government agreement concluded by the Sahtu, it must be on an interim basis and be consented to by the Sahtu Dene and Metis. Third, the Sahtu Dene and Metis will negotiate jurisdictional space and paramountcy through self-government negotiations with the federal government.

There are other principles, but I am not going to go through them because we have run out of time. But it really distresses me to listen to the Minister announcing that he is appointing someone to begin the discussions of devolution with the GNWT, that we are going to have a strong central government and that self-government has to be within that context.

I think what has happened is that the GNWT has undermined not only the communities and the regions, but this whole process. And I think it really is - I don't know if it's done in bad faith or if it's done intentionally - but that is the message we are getting loud and clear in the Sahtu. Someone is undermining this whole process and we came to this meeting with an open mind. We knew what we wanted under self-government, but we agreed to be part of this process to ensure that it does not interfere with our self-government process and to ensure that we have some sort of government that everybody can live with. But it's really a problem now. Thank you very much.

Gerald Antoine

Deh Cho First Nations

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present the Deh Cho proposal. I'm going to outline the Constitutional Development Steering Committee process. and then I'm going compare the Deh Cho proposal with it.

The CDSC process will create a new relationship for public, community and aboriginal institutions.

The Constitution of Canada recognizes in section 35, the inherent right of aboriginal nations to govern themselves, and you heard it from the Minister's mouth.

The term constitutional development of NWT is actually incorrect. The process you are involved in will result in the creation of a federal

statute for the governance of the western Arctic, not a constitution. The Deh Cho First Nations have a vision of a parallel, stand alone government for the Deh Cho, created by a constitution of Denendeh. A constitution with a basis in section 35 of the Canadian Constitution. The Deh Cho First Nations would rather create a constitution for the Deh Cho on their own, without being involved in the CDSC process.

To date, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Ron Irwin, has said that a separate Deh Cho constitution is not an option for the federal government. You heard it from him today. In the process that's been outlined, it talks about founding principles, and I believe there are eight. I will outline the CDSC founding principles, followed by the Deh Cho founding principles.

First, the Constitutional Development Steering Committee is working towards establishing an innovative constitution and structure of government for a western territory. The Deh Cho First Nations have already developed their own constitution for the Deh Cho Denendeh, which is innovative and public in nature.

Second, the government will represent and serve all residents of the western territory. Although the government of Denendeh, Deh Cho will be established on the basis of the inherent right to govern, it will be a government for all people in the Deh Cho. Not just aboriginal people.

Third, there will be community, central and regional government institutions. The government of Denendeh will also have community, which is First Nations, central which is tribal, and government institutions, however, their primary power will lie with the community government.

Fourth, the constitution of the western territory will be consistent with the constitution of Canada including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The constitution of Denendeh will also be consistent with the constitution of Canada, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Fifth, the constitution of the western territory will recognize and affirm and accommodate to the maximum extent possible existing aboriginal and treaty rights, including modern treaties and aboriginal peoples' right to self-government. The constitution of Denendeh will not merely accommodate aboriginal and treaty rights. Those rights will be the foundation of the government.

Sixth, the new system of government will include aboriginal government institutions as well as public government institutions. A parallel system of government will be preferred to the integrated system that it would accommodate land issues and self-government in a way that would do justice to aboriginal interests.

Seventh, the new government will recognize self-government agreements negotiated by aboriginal peoples and Canada. The government of Denendeh will be composed of Denendeh First Nations councils. These governments will be three-branched governments: legislative, executive and judicial powers.

And finally, division of power will be developed with a view to allow authority to be exercised by the level of government which is able to deliver a service most efficiently and effectively. The First Nations government will have jurisdiction over their traditional regions, and will serve as a basic unit of government, not the central government.

And under "Government Structures" the CDSC wants a strong central government located in Yellowknife, which will accommodate regional and community governments.

The Deh Cho First Nations wants the government of Denendeh to be composed of Denendeh First Nations councils, which are the legislative, executive and judicial branch of the Denendeh courts; a senate of elders will serve as their advisors to the elected councils. These governments will have jurisdiction over their traditional regions, and will serve as a basic unit of government.

And "Division of Powers", the central government in Yellowknife will be the paramount government, the regional governments of Deh Cho will be subordinate to the western NWT.

The Deh Cho First Nations wants jurisdiction over their traditional regions and will serve as a basic unit of government.

And under "Political Representation", CDSC says various lobby groups are invited to give input into the formulation of a constitution of the western NWT. First Nations will be just one such lobby group.

The Deh Cho First Nations say that although the primary factor for the formulation of the constitution of Denendeh will be Dene traditional principles and aboriginal and treaty rights, the rights and interests of the non-Dene will be respected. The non-Dene will be expected to develop an understanding and appreciation of Dene traditional principles.

The elders have stated over and over again that the treaty did not provide the Crown with any right to change the Dene way of doing things in any way, nor did it surrender land.

Grand Chief Gerald Antoine
Deh Cho Tribal Council

It is logical therefore, to conclude that although there is a constitutional relationship between the Dene and Canada through the treaties, (as oral agreements), the governing of the lands in Denendeh is the jurisdiction of the Dene and our descendants, and all non-Dene living in Denendeh are expected to adapt to the Dene mode of government.

It is expected, then, that the Constitutional Commission, in its deliberations on principles and constitutional parameters will honor, finally, this historical Dene perspective on treaty and lands, as it is still consistently presented by elders and validated by legal affidavits, as presented in the court case of Paulette vs. the Crown.

With those provisions in mind then, the Deh Cho First Nations presents the following:

Based on the terms of the Deh Cho proposal as presented in the packages and the brief summary just provided, the Deh Cho government representatives are only mandated to pursue a stand-alone government. We as representatives of the Deh Cho First Nations government are here to promote and enhance the Deh Cho Position. As the rest of the west unfolds and takes on a new shape, the Deh Cho remains firm in [its] position.

We as Dene descendants, are being consistent with our elders. If other regions want to accept another process, we will not stand in their way. Therefore, we do not give our consent to the existing so called Northwest Territories Government, nor any other government being formed which would try to control and make laws, regulations and policies on our traditional lands. Any discussion about extending a foreign government over our lands will be resisted. We fully understand and support the NWT Treaty 8 in their position.

We insist on a formal protocol, which provides us with the same respect given our forefathers.

Sovereign nations made treaties. This must be acknowledged. This is the foundation that we are working from. We as Dene and Dene-descendants insist that the respect given our forefathers, at the time the oral treaties were made, be given to us.

We intend to sit as official government representatives from the Deh Cho, just as the federal government of Canada officials are, and will listen to what you have to say. We are not trying to stall your process. We will support the other regions as to what they are trying to develop and we expect the same in return.

We as Dene and Dene-descendants of the Deh Cho thank you for your time and commitment to have us involved, and we thank you for your support.

Bertha Allen:

Native Women's Association & Status of Women Council

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. The responsibility of constitution building is no one person's responsibility. It is the responsibility of all members of our northern society. As role models in a leadership position, we have all met with, listened to and taken into consideration what our band councils, Metis Locals, local community corporations, advocacy groups, private business and the general public has had to say about a new constitution for a new western NWT.

As a representative of women in the NWT, I believe we as women have gone as far as we can go towards providing our concerns - the issues and guiding principles - in this consultation process. It is now time for us to sit, learn and listen to our delegates as they put forth the position that we as women have been discussing for the past three to four years for this particular process.

Some of the positions women have discussed and will be put forth during the next few days are: (1) Barriers to women in politics - including the fact that women are grossly under-represented in upper management positions and government; (2) Women have to make considerations, such as child care and the distance they have to travel when going to major centres for meetings; (3) Women want a social charter that will give recognition for safe working environments; (4) Recognition for fair practice for young women entering the workplace; (5) Better affirmative action policy incentives and basic education standards for the illiterate are among other commitments that have to be

Bertha Allen, (l), President of the Native Women's Association with women delegates.

entrenched in the new western constitution; (6) Having access to equity which would reduce poverty among women; (7) Fundamental principles; Women have said during our many, many discussions with them over the years, [that a] new constitution [should] establish a minimum of rights for all citizens regardless of ethnic origin, community or region of residence, gender, ability or sexual orientation; (8) A code of conduct to make members of our governing bodies accountable for their actions.

These are not just only issues that we are concerned about. If you go to the condensed report in your manual, you will see that we have touched upon many other things, such as issues of education, violence and healing.

Women are also concerned about issues such as [constitutional] guarantee of social and economic rights of all citizens by means of a social charter having four basic elements: First, a statement of the values and principles which residents of the new western territory affirm and which should guide government in the realm of social policy. Second, institutions for developing, protecting, negotiating, monitoring and enforcing policies to give concrete expression to these values and principles. Third, a provision for broad public participation to ensure that policies, programs and services continue to be responsive to public needs. And fourth, a recognition that territorial sharing is required for realizing the social charter principles across the new western territory.

The aboriginal right to self-government must be entrenched. Aboriginal rights relating to language, culture and any political rights not included in claims agreements should be entrenched in the constitution, [and] means found to ensure that all aboriginal rights are protected.

The last biggie, I leave for the last. Historically, aboriginal society was a balanced society. There was shared responsibility, there was mutual respect and equal partnership between men and women. I think it is time that this was regenerated. This cultural tradition has to be regenerated so that everyone benefits.

Therefore, northern women's vision for a new western territory includes 50% representation in the newly structured Legislative Assembly. [Women] do not want just 50% on boards and commissions - they also want representation. Fifty percent in the new legislature.

When we received monies in May of 1993 to consult women about their views, we looked at our northern society as a whole, but we focused on issues of our northern women. How, we [asked] ourselves, can we make sure all northerners feel their interests [are represented], their voices heard and most importantly, their rights protected as individuals and as collective society?

We brought together under our guiding principles all the issues and concerns. We feel our preparatory work has been done. We feel our guiding principles reflect the unity of issues and concerns we all hope will foster a unity among our communities, regions and lifestyle. And, as women of the western NWT, they have stated loud and clear that they want to break the silence. Women want to empower themselves, and we are ready to take the next step, and together, we can achieve what we want in a new western territorial constitution.

Northern women have shared their vision of what they want in a new constitution, and an equal partnership with a focus on holistic governing is required.

Bob Simpson:

Gwich'in Tribal Council, Inuvialuit Regional Corp. & Beaufort-Delta Municipalities

I was "co-opted" to do this presentation. First of all, I would like to start off with a little bit of the historical background to [our] position that has been developed.

The Inuvialuit had for many years, supported regional government structure in the Beaufort communities. In 1993, the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit got together and decided they would like to expand and include the Delta communities. During the *Beaufort-Delta Leadership Conference*, which included all the municipalities plus the aboriginal leaders, it was agreed that we would also include the municipalities into the actual structure of the negotiations and the process that we would set out for ourselves. So we have formed a committee that oversees the negotiations and the direction of the regional government proposal - it consists of two people from the municipalities, two people from the Inuvialuit and two people from the Gwich'in.

There is also a discussion paper available. We can make it available to everyone. It was drafted as far back as November 1993, and has been reaffirmed by the Delta-Beaufort Conference twice already. It continues to evolve as we have discussions.

I would like to outline some things about the land claim provisions in both the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Agreement because they are very important in these discussions and we have had some preliminary discussion with the GNWT and the federal government.

One thing that both the federal and territorial governments have stated is that regional government negotiations must be compatible with the CDSC process. That has not been supported by our leadership. The provisions of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in Agreement are constitutionally protected. There are very detailed processes in the Gwich'in agreement, and they must be followed. In the CDSC process, the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit and the municipalities in the Beaufort-Delta continue to participate. I think through their efforts, they have shown that we fully support the

discussions that are going to be happening in the next few days, and hopefully, they will be very productive.

Another thing that we have experienced in negotiations with both governments - and we agree with this fact - [is that the] negotiations have to be comprehensive. We can't set up a government system without thinking about the impact on community government. And in fact, in our ongoing discussions with the communities, the communities are very autonomous within the region.

It's more like an association of communities working together within the region. Aboriginal self-government of a regional public system must be addressed. It's very important, the provisions that Mr. Irwin [stated] today, that the inherent right under Section 35 be fully recognized.

And I think it's very appropriate to express that the Beaufort and Delta leaders do support a territorial central government, but they look at the power [as being] community based. That's [really where] the impact of government is going to have its most effect.

I would like to make a point that Sahtu brought up earlier in their presentation - devolution. Devolution can have an effect on not only negotiations, but the CDSC process. It should be carried out in the context of political development in the North - or negotiations as well.

Bob Simpson, Gwich'in/Inuvialuit/ Beaufort-Delta municipalities committee

I will just talk a little about our proposal. It's in the discussion paper and it's been expressed over and over, but I'll just outline it. It's very clear that it [the proposal] is a public government system, and that is something the aboriginal groups have consciously done and consented to. By having the municipalities participate in the actual negotiations and the CDSC process, the Beaufort and Delta group has really expressed that. We have some principles on the powers that are being sought. We do want to have cost effectiveness and efficient delivery of programs and services. But all too often, we find that territorial or federal governments establish unreasonable standards through their legislation and so we would like to see some legislative powers at the regional and community levels as well.

I think it's very clear that this constitutional development process is a real opportunity for everybody. With participation by everybody, we will be able to really effect something here. We will really accomplish something that's good for the future for everybody.

I [will] also make a statement that relates back to the negotiation process as well. Mr. Irwin stated very clearly today that he wanted to start working towards governing systems in the North. Well, we tabled our discussion paper with the government in 1993. No responses for a year. We met with the Minister in June and he said, "we're prepared to negotiate - let's get on with it." Nine months later and we are still not at the table in a serious manner. So I think if Mr. Irwin's going to be making a very strong statement that he's prepared to deal with the subject in the North, well let's see some results.

James WahShee:

Dogrib Treaty 11 Council

Thank you, Mr. Koe. Elders, honoured guests, all of the delegates to this First Constitutional Conference - my name is James WahShee, and I am speaking tonight as the self-government negotiator for the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, the organization which is mandated to represent the interests of the four Dogrib communities of Rae-Edzo, Rae Lakes, Snare Lake, and Wha Ti.

The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council is currently negotiating the implementation of its inherent right of self-government within the context of comprehensive claim talks with the government of Canada. These ongoing talks will be the primary vehicle for the recognition and implementation of the Dogribs' inherent right of self-government within Canada. They will lead to constitutional recognition and protection for Dogrib self-government arrangements as part of our Land Claim Settlement.

The Dogrib people are undertaking these negotiations with Canada on the basis of strong and repeated commitments from Minister Irwin and from senior DIAND officials to negotiate the Dogribs' inherent political rights within our land claim.

The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council supports other aboriginal organizations and communities in the western NWT in their efforts to negotiate the implementation of their inherent right of self-government with the Government of Canada.

Now, to the issue at hand: The Dogrib people are keenly aware of the great significance of this constitutional conference for the future of us all in the western NWT. Clearly, we have reached a historic crossroads in the constitutional and political development of this territory.

Recognizing this, I will take Mr. Clark's advice. This afternoon he stressed the importance of our speaking frankly about our

agreements and disagreements. I agree. This is not time for beating about the bush. So, I will speak frankly.

Some of what was said this afternoon, the Dogrib people can agree with: (1) The western NWT faces a tremendous challenge in designing a new set of fundamental rules to govern our collective co-existence in the 1990s and the 21st century; (2) We all have a common interest in deciding on our constitutional future together as northerners, rather than having it imposed on us from outside; (3) We all seek a restructuring of the institutions of government in the western NWT to make them more representative of the aspirations and cultures of the people of this territory; (4) We share the desire for stability and an improved economic climate which fosters economic development and the well-being of our communities; (5) Perhaps most fundamentally, we share a desire to reorder and to strengthen the bonds and relationship among the communities and people living within this territory.

The Dogrib people accept these fundamental goals and challenges. We strongly believe that northerners can work together to achieve a new territorial constitution, which is generally acceptable to and which benefits all residents of the western NWT, as well as future generations.

Minister Irwin and Premier Cournoyea spoke about territorial and federal government realities this afternoon. Let me now talk to you about Dogrib realities. Time is limited, so I will quickly explain the main elements of the Dogrib constitutional position. We will provide more details in the conference workshops and plenary sessions scheduled to take place over the next four days.

For the sake of convenience, I will outline our position under the five main headings which have been adopted for this conference:

(1) Process: Let me make clear that the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council is still in support of the CDSC process, and that we intend to participate fully in the process of developing a constitution for a new territory in the western NWT. I also want to be clear about this: the CDSC process is not the only process of constitutional change in the NWT. For the Dogribs, there is another, even more important process, our land claim negotiations with the government of Canada.

Both processes have a crucial and legitimate role to play in achieving constitutional reform in the territory - the CDSC process is responsible for reforming the system of public government in the territory, while our land claim talks will address self-government for the Dogrib people.

I will repeat this crucial point. The CDSC process must focus on designing a new public government system for a western territory, and will not have a say in how the Dogribs negotiate and implement their inherent right of self-government.

There should be no further transfers of power from Ottawa to the GNWT, until agreement is reached on a Constitution for a new western territory. If devolution talks go ahead, the aboriginal members of the CDSC must approve any new transfers.

(2) Principles: The Dogrib people possess the inherent right of self-government, and this right is entrenched in the Constitution of Canada under Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. This is the basic principle for the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, which guides our participation in this conference in the western constitutional reform process.

A Constitution for a new western territory must explicitly recognize and affirm the aboriginal and treaty rights of the territory's aboriginal peoples, including the inherent right of self-government, aboriginal language and culture rights, and rights set out in land claim and self-government agreements.

The present system of government in the western NWT must be changed, so that it accommodates aboriginal self-government including self-government arrangements which the Dogribs negotiate with the government of Canada.

A new system of power sharing is necessary in the western NWT, which shifts authority and resources from the central and territorial level to regional and community governments.

A new Constitution must be comprehensive and flexible enough to make room for the different aspirations and circumstances of the

MLA Henry Zoe (l), James WahShee (centre), Ted Blondin (r)

aboriginal peoples in the western NWT.

Regardless of the final shape of the new system of government for a western territory, the special "fiduciary" relationship between the Dogrib people and Canada must remain.

(3) Structures: The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council's main focus in this conference and in the rest of the CDSC process will be on the task of reforming the territorial/central level of government and its institutions.

Regional and community self-government for the Dogrib people will be worked out in the context of land claim/self-government talks with the government of Canada.

Consistent with our inherent right of self-government, Dogrib governing institutions will operate independently, and on an equal legal footing with other orders of government.

Relationships between Dogrib government and public government in a western territory will be based on negotiated inter-governmental agreements, delegations of power and sharing of resources.

(4) Powers: The powers, jurisdictions and resources of Dogrib governing institutions will be negotiated with the government of Canada, and not in the CDSC process.

The sharing of jurisdictions among Dogrib governing bodies and other governments will be resolved primarily in self-government talks between the Dogribs and the Government of Canada.

The implementation of Dogrib self-government will require a significant shift of authority and resources from the territorial and federal governments to Dogrib regional and community governing bodies

Issues relating to the ownership and control of lands, waters and resources within the Dogribs' traditional territory will be addressed in land claim negotiations with the Government of Canada, and not in the CDSC process.

(5) Representation: A new Constitution for a western territory must include explicit guarantees for Dogrib representation in the legislative assembly of the territorial government. Every regional aboriginal organization in the western territory must be guaranteed a minimum number or percentage of seats in the territorial legislature.

Representation by population is not an appropriate basis for allocating seats in a new territorial legislative assembly. Instead, several factors must be taken into account — population; number of communities; number of regional/district units; and, guarantees for aboriginal representation.

An amending formula for the new Constitution must provide that constitutional amendments affecting aboriginal and treaty rights must be approved by all of the aboriginal organizations represented in the territorial assembly.

Dennis Bevington:

The Western Tax-Based Municipalities

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Under the stress of being chosen to speak [and with] the speaking order being chosen out of a large metal container, I am glad to be up here now speaking to you on behalf of the Association of Western Tax-Based Municipalities. I will first go into an explanation of how this name and the organization came about.

As the CDSC was [being] formulated, there was an interest expressed in seeing a non-aboriginal perspective presented as part of the overall package being developed. As you have seen here tonight, presentations [have been made by] many serious and hard-working political organizations throughout the North. The municipalities - the tax-based municipalities - were called upon to perform that function for non-aboriginals. It was felt that they would be most able to provide that representation.

When this was transmitted to the municipalities - when we had our first meeting - I think we all felt a uniform sense that this was somewhat inappropriate to the municipalities and really, as elected bodies, elected from the public in each of our communities, we had to represent every individual that put us where we are - in office as elected public officials. And as such, we undertook to develop a position which would represent municipalities and community government as a whole.

It was a very difficult process as you can sense from my comments. There is no way that one can differentiate in the communities between who supports you and who doesn't. Certainly, that meant we would have to come up with a position that could reflect the general public. And I think the document that was presented was a baseline and was a discussion document for that general purpose.

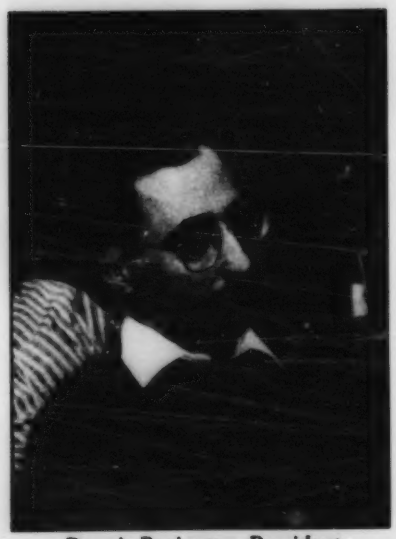
We, the Association of Western Tax-Based Municipalities - [including] the city of Yellowknife, the Town of Hay River, Fort Smith, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson and the Town of Inuvik - chose not to participate, and joined in with the Beaufort Delta presentation. Within the development of this proposal or this presentation over a period of a year, we enlisted the aid of consultants - as community governments want to do. We looked at issues that involved the communities. We had a great deal of difficulty with political issues. We had less difficulty with issues of principle and rights. I think we all felt quite assured that our governments represent all people, and should portray that. We should portray the ability of individuals in a community to vote, to run for office and to uphold the principles of participatory democracy at all times.

In the area of politics of course, our communities - even within the Association of Western Tax-Based

Municipalities - are very different. We represent - just as every community does in the North - a very unique and very exciting place to live, populated by a variety of people. Some are traditional and some are new inhabitants that form our communities. So,within the political side of our presentation, I think that you will find the difference between regional government and strongly centralized government was hotly debated.

The consensus was that a strong central government was good for the territories. Within the municipal context, municipal governments were a very strong element that could provide good direction and the necessary services to every community. And within the document, we call for a stronger place within any legislation [or] constitution for the Northwest Territories, for municipal government - for the people that run the communities that you live in, for the people that represent all of us. And I think that that recognition is key within our document. It's something that all of us felt strongly about.

The principles of Canadian government are strong and widely accepted throughout the world as good principles - the Canadian Charter of Rights



Dennis Bevington, President
NWT Association of Municipalities

is a good document - many things to learn from. And I think we represent that position within our perspective.

If you look [at] our document that was presented to you as a base line of information on government - on how government can be run in a particular context - I think it can be very valuable in the work that is going on here today and through the week. I think if you look [at] it as a political manifesto, I do not think that's an appropriate thing to do. Take what you can get from that document, use it.

We all recognized after it was completed that we certainly all could not support everything that went into the document, but I think over the course of time - since February when it was written - that we have come to understand that this will be a consensus process, that everything that happens here will be designed to bring us closer together, to make us understand what it is that we require to live together in the North. When we grasp that - when we take that - we can make this a stronger place. We can make it a place where everyone can prosper, can live, can respect the land, can respect the values of others, can respect the rights and traditions of others.

The last constitutional conference I remember attending [was] in 1982. It was organized by Nick Sibbeston. I don't know if Jim Bourque is here tonight- I would certainly see him in the crowd. But I remember at the time, Jim made a comment I thought was quite appropriate. Aboriginal organizations were much more together in terms of a combined approach - looking at working together to combine a single government - Denendeh. The others were kind of around the edges looking in. Jim Bourque's comment was, "It's like a group of dogs got together, smelling each other out."

I don't think we have to go through that process anymore. From what I see here today, a lot of people understand what they want in government. I think we can move ahead, with a little humour too. With goodwill and a spirit of consensus, it is possible to do anything that we want to do here. We have to live in this land. We have to live together. Those are facts that I think are inalienable to all of us. I hope that we can accomplish much this week, and that all of us will take from this more than we brought today. Thank you.

Gary Bohnet

Metis Nation NWT

Thanks Fred. Generally speaking, the Métis are used to being last because we have been left behind for so long. (It takes us a while to catch on!) Anyway, on behalf of the Métis Nation NWT, I would like to pay our respects to the elders, all participants of this conference and to past leaders who got us this far.

My presentation today is going to be two-fold. I am going to talk a little bit about things that concern us as far as some of the statements made by the Minister and his appearance today, and then I will get into some of the issues as far as they are of importance to the Métis.

Most of us came to this conference very, very optimistic. In particular, the Métis, because we are hoping to see a lot of progressive movement.

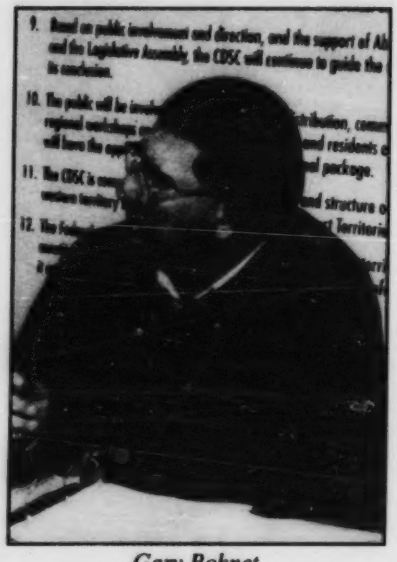
Unfortunately, I think Minister Irwin possibly has set us back substantially and I want to put that in perspective. Mr. Irwin stated that there is this window open - this "window of opportunity". Well the Métis of the NWT have been trying and knocking on this window for years and years and years. When we deal with the federal government, we have found that that window has been barred to the Métis, but it's unacceptable to the Métis and we will not accept it anymore. Mr. Irwin says he is ready to move. Well, we have heard this so many times. They are ready to move on this, they are ready to move on that. We have seen little

or no movement from the federal government on Métis issues and generally speaking, on aboriginal issues in this territory.

For example, the South Slave Métis Tribal Council. They have been promised a process of negotiations. There has been no movement on that by the federal government. Surprisingly enough, today, when we asked the Minister, he said he had not seen it. We talk to the bureaucrats. They tell us "Well the Minister didn't give us permission to go ahead with it." So I tell you, we are getting used to this bureaucratic run-around.

One of the other things the Minister said to us is that his Department is committed to transferring the rest of these provincial-like powers to the government of the Northwest Territories. The Métis Nation outright rejects that. We reject that until all the aboriginal and treaty rights are fully addressed in this territory.

There are other areas that the Minister has not responded to. Some of the other aboriginal First Nations have taken positions - for example, the Deh Cho Nation - their aspiration for a Deh Cho government for their own territory. That was fully



Gary Bohnet
President, Metis Nation - NWT

supported by the Métis. We still fully support their position. Keep at it and stick to your guns. You have our support.

After that, things started to get - we knew things were going to get - worse because all of a sudden this thing fell down. We knew things were going to get worse. Our problem as Métis [is] that we are facing the old saying "we're like a football" - a political football. The federal government tells us "Well, the Northwest Territories' government will look after you". The Northwest Territories' government says "The federal government." So we're bounced back and forth. I tell you, us Métis, we are sick and tired of it. I had to say that about the Minister's statements because we are frustrated with the lack of progress with the federal government.

I started off my comments saying that we were very optimistic about the Constitutional Development Steering Committee process. I really hope that we are going to have success at the end of the day, and I want to talk a little about that.

The Métis Nation Northwest Territories' fundamental position is that the Bourque Commission's report is the bare minimum - the bare minimum, that we will accept as Métis. The Bourque Commission Report was the most extensive consultation with the people in the communities that there was ever done in this territory. What has happened to it? Nothing. The Métis Nation Northwest Territories will be articulating this week the positions that they put through that consultation process.

Some of these positions dealt with issues like Métis rights - the whole gamut of Métis rights. They must receive the protection of Section 35 - nothing less. When I am talking about Métis rights, I'll be a little more specific. They are in our document and I am not going to read them all, but there are some that are important:

(1) The Métis want the same right to hunt, fish, trap and gather as other First Nations in this territory. We demand it.

(2) The Métis Nation demands a land base - no less of a quantum of land than those other regions that have settled claims. We are not asking for a specific land base in the areas that already settled claims, but the Métis in the other areas of the Territory that have not settled land claims deserve it and it's their aboriginal right.

(3) The Métis of each Métis First Nation have the right, deserve the right, to exercise its inherent right to self-government. No government, other than an aboriginal government - a Métis government - can determine what the inherent right of its people are. So the federal government or the territorial government will not determine our inherent right. The Métis people will determine their own inherent right.

(4) In the very near future, a few years from now, Aboriginal people in this territory and the western territory are going to be a minority. The Métis already are a minority. We are going in with a position very similar to the Treaty 11 Council. We want guaranteed representation in any new legislature and we want a veto power on issues that affect the Métis - the process itself. We have been very active players in the constitutional development process. We have concerns about the process. The process is far too big and cumbersome. We've got to look at streamlining this process and the Métis want full participation in any new process that is developed.

(5) One of the areas I would like to clear up, is the idea of community government versus a District or regional government versus central government. The Métis believe all levels should be strong. But the power must come from the communities first and if regional governments are there - and it is the wishes of those people in those regions - then it is their right and

nobody should take it away from them. These are the positions of the Métis.

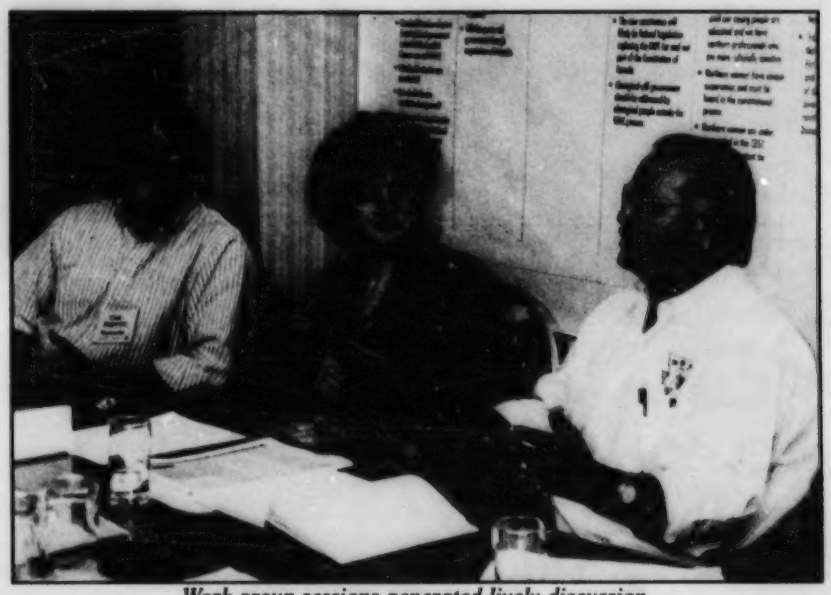
The list could go on and on and on. We come to this conference respecting everybody else's position. We probably have more in common than divides us. Let's work this next few days on those things and problems that we have that we can work on together. We will respect your views, we will respect your positions. Respect ours.

A very wise person, Daniel Sonfrere, gave some remarks at the plenary this afternoon. What he simply said is what we are doing in the next short while is not for us - it is for people who are coming - and we have to start regaining the trust among ourselves. We have to learn to trust each other again.

That trust is not here. The reality is we don't trust the territorial government, and I want to say why. The federal government is going to deal with the territorial government on the transfer of the remainder of provincial- like jurisdictions, land and a few other issues. This territorial government has been negotiating - making deals - behind the constitutional development process' back, behind the aboriginal people's back and that is why we do not trust the government.

But to change the territorial government we need a process like this so we are in for the long haul, folks.

Good luck and have a good meeting.



Work group sessions generated lively discussion.

Our elders reminded us that our work is for future generations.

The 12 working groups were asked to discuss five main areas of constitution building: Constitutional Process; Founding Principles; Government Structures and Powers; Representation; and Continuing the Constitutional Process. The following points reflect areas of agreement, or emerging consensus from those workshops.

Constitutional Process

(1) CDSC & Self-government are parallel processes and must be pursued concurrently

(2) Progress needed on aboriginal rights and inherent right of self-government

(3) Need for central government that is community driven (Except Deh Cho observers)

(4) Local communities must be part of process and source of political power

Founding Principles

(1) The community must be the basis of any new structure of government

(2) All 4 levels of government - community, aboriginal, regional and central - are necessary and should be entrenched

(3) The Constitution must recognize the individual and collective rights of all northerners

(4) The Constitution must recognize the collective rights of all aboriginal peoples

(5) There should be a statement of social principles as a goal for llegislative policy

(6) There was strong support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bourque Report on individual and collective rights and a Social Charter

Government Structures & Powers

(1) Basis for political power should reside in the community

(2) There is strong support for the recommendations of the Bourque Commission on structures and powers

(3) Communities should have the necessary financial resources to deliver a broad range of services

(4) Research is needed on probable costs of community and regionally based government

(5) Communities should have the power to form regional / district governments

Representation

(1) Each region / district should establish its own basis for representation

(2) Provisions to encourage balanced representation of aboriginal and others are required

Continuing the Constitutional Process

(1) It is imperative that progress be made on negotiations on land claims and self-government

(2) There is general satisfaction with the process and the outcome of this conference

(3) A second conference should be held within a year to deal with the text of a constitution

(4) Independent research is needed on cost of government, representation, etc.

(5) More public involvement regarding constitutional options is needed, particularly at the community level

Questions:

- How can we accommodate the needs and aspirations of all peoples in the western NWT?
- What is the connection between this process and aboriginal self-government negotiations?
- How can we work to build public government and aboriginal self-government institutions that accommodate each other?

Emerging Consensus:

(1) CDSC & Self-government are parallel processes and must be pursued concurrently

(2) Progress needed on aboriginal rights and inherent right of self-government

(3) Need for central government that is community driven (Except Deh Cho observers)

(4) Local communities must be part of process and source of political power

Additional Ideas:*

(1) New Constitution to be an NWT document not subject to change from the outside

(2) Fiscal and efficiency considerations need careful assessment

(3) Groups and organizations can opt into the process

(4) Need for consent from affected groups

**The "Additional Ideas" were expressed by one or more working groups, but were not discussed by all Conference Participants. They are included here simply as additional ideas for possible consideration.*

WORKING GROUP #1

(1) CDSC process is only one track of a parallel process. The other process is the self-government process.

(2) The CDSC process is trying to make progress, but aboriginal peoples' inherent right to self-government is not making progress. Part of the picture is therefore missing.

(3) Lack of clear progress on self-government is affecting the CDSC process, and unless progress is made on self-government, it will limit progress on the CDSC constitutional reform front in the NWT.

(4) Substantive and concrete negotiations on self government must begin, so that the CDSC process will progress.

(5) It is necessary to see first what kind of self-government structures are agreed upon, before we can see how the self-government process and the CDSC process relate. We cannot see the self-government structures yet.

(6) The strongest message we can recommend for the constitutional process is that substantive, concrete negotiations and proposals on self-government must begin. Then we can look at the public government end of things.

WORKING GROUP #2

(1) The aboriginal self-government process and the CDSC process are two separate processes, but both share the objective of trying to achieve more control at the local level.

(2) We have to remove barriers and strengthen understanding and trust before we can proceed.

(3) There is a need for more consultation and support for each other's goals and aspirations - on an ongoing basis - at the community, regional and territorial levels by removing barriers. This will strengthen sharing, trust, understanding and knowledge.

(4) Aboriginal self-government, Treaty rights, land claims, the Deh Cho proposal and Metis rights should be entrenched in a new NWT constitution.

WORKING GROUP #3

(1) A set of principles was first discussed. The group reached a consensus on the following:

- Constitution should incorporate the inherent right to self-government;
- New constitution should abide by the Canadian Charter;
- New constitution should include some type of social charter;
- All aboriginal agreements and Treaty rights to be upheld.

(2) Under "process" we agreed that (1) groups and organizations have a right to "opt into" the constitutional process; (2) a new constitution must be approved by referendum; (3) the process of constitutional reform must be consistent, remain public and have greater public participation.

(3) No consensus: (1) some felt the CDSC was not independent of the NWT Government; (2) some thought the CDSC should be downsized; (3) some felt there were too many politicians involved in the process.

(4) A majority of the group agreed that the devolution of powers from the federal government to the GNWT must be halted until all aboriginal issues are settled.

WORKING GROUP #4

(1) There is a will to make the "arranged marriage" between aboriginal peoples and non-aboriginals work.

(2) New constitution to be an NWT document not subject to change from outside.

(3) Central government is needed to reduce cost of government for communities.

(4) Communities need to exercise real power.

(5) There is a need for guaranteed representation as it recognizes inherent rights.

(6) Need consent from affected groups in regards to constitutional amendment.

(7) There is need for a Social Charter. There is also need for healing to begin now.

WORKING GROUP #5

(1) Need a central government to coordinate common issues such as environmental standards (Deh Cho disagree).

(2) Reaffirm aboriginal and treaty rights.

(3) Develop some form of regional government to recognize aboriginal & treaty rights.

(4) Public government and self-government are parallel processes.

(5) Must find common priorities to work on rather than focusing on differences.

WORKING GROUP #6

(1) Group issued three basic statements before moving into a discussion over process:

- Self-government negotiations and the CDSC process have to continue;
- These two processes should lead to legislation or a constitutional document that must allow for flexibility and changes in the future but one that cannot be undermined by outside forces;
- We must focus on community powers. All powers must come from the community level.

(2) Areas of responsibility must be decided, such as representation by different groups. These areas of responsibility will identify common interests and differences.

(3) There must be ongoing consultations at all levels to ensure that no one feels left out of the process.

WORKING GROUP #7

(1) Status quo not acceptable to majority of the group & people expect changes.

(2) Whether or not we can afford a new system or type of government is unclear. Further research on the financial implications is recommended.

(3) There is need for respect, goodwill, & trust throughout the process among all participants.

(4) There is also a need for give and take negotiations or compromises to accommodate all the residents of the NWT.

(5) There is a need for better understanding on the principles of self-government, such as what it means. How is it going to be implemented?

(6) The process of self-government must be recognized as a right.

WORKING GROUP #8

(1) This process is an example of how to accommodate everyone's needs. We have to compromise in a healthy, positive way & need to distinguish between needs, wants & aspirations.

(2) Another factor to consider is "affordability."

(3) Group discussed the meaning behind aboriginal self-government: (1) it is local people making decisions about things that affect them; (2) it is an avenue to recover native language and culture.

(4) The group is not yet sure what the connection is between aboriginal self-government and public government. In one way, they can almost be seen as the same thing in communities where the majority of residents are aboriginal.

(5) In the Delta, both public and aboriginal government works closely together. This could be used as a model.

(6) "Bigger" decisions (eg. the economy) should happen at the regional level.

(7) The group also says they have an open door for the Treaty 8 people.

WORKING GROUP #9

(1) A process for change must be put in place. If not, the status quo will remain.

(2) Self-government & constitutional development must ensure more power for local communities.

(3) Throughout the constitutional development process, there must be clear information and opportunities for input which will ensure the process is community-driven.

(4) Central government needs to have limits placed upon it. Community-based government must be strengthened.

(5) Aboriginal groups have the right to determine the level of coordination between the two processes.

WORKING GROUP #10

(1) CDSC has allowed opportunity for people to discuss their ideas and views, & has brought together all the previous discussions. Public meetings are important, and delegates to this conference should report back to their community about the conference. Lines of communication must remain open to all.

(2) There is a role for the federal government to play in parallel discussions. The federal government should honor its commitment to outstanding issues including self-government and land claims.

(3) The federal government has to start negotiations now. There have been too many delays. A lot of delays center around the lack of federal movement on land claims.

(4) There is no connection (at this time) between the CDSC process and aboriginal self-government negotiations. However, if you participate in one, that does not mean you cannot participate in the other. They are not mutually exclusive.

(5) The process of constitutional reform should be community-driven, to build cooperation & consensus. Bourque Commission could be a good starting point.

WORKING GROUP #11

(1) Must identify needs & aspirations of the people - particularly at the community level.

(2) Need to find a way to get more people discussing constitutional issues at the community level.

(3) The term self-government needs to be defined.

(4) Aboriginal and self-government claims need to be settled.

(5) Public government needs to be restructured to accommodate aboriginal aspirations so the central government becomes everybody's government.

WORKING GROUP #12

(1) Three types of process were discussed by group twelve: (1) conference processes, (2) CDSC processes, (3) political processes

(2) Conference Process: All people need to be represented at the conference. They can be represented by having access to those who will participate, and participants who represent them - i.e. women, disabled, immigrants, young people

(3) CDSC Process: All groups/types of people must have access to CDSC process. Trust, commitment, open communication between all groups, types of people, & levels of government must be a priority for the process to continue. Elder spoke strongly that it is up to us to make it right & do this based on knowledge & from our hearts.

(4) The federal government must clarify their position on self-government if this process is to work

(5) This should be a community driven process rather than coming from GNWT

(6) Political Process: Treaty and self-government has historical importance so we must understand them and this process from a historical perspective. Treaty and land claims are supreme and must be honoured.

(7) We support the self-government process and treaty and land claims process.

(8) No more devolution or transfers if the idea comes from the Government. It must come at the request & pace of the community with training & funds. Devolution from federal government should occur with the full involvement of aboriginal people & with full protection of treaty rights

(9) Our elder stated that leaders have a responsibility to take everything on the land into consideration - take care of all the people, whoever they are, and take care of the land because the land is the bank.

(10) Funds flow efficiently from the federal government to the central government to communities, the authority and responsibility then flows upwards to the region if the community agrees.

(11) Central government responsible for protecting community, & interfacing with federal government.

(12) Provisions must be made for structures of the Dene Nation and the Metis nation - i.e. everyone has a forum to meet and interface with the federal government (by everyone we [aboriginal] mean it is important for the Dene/Metis to bring non-Dene into our government structures and provide an opportunity for non-Dene to learn our perspective)

(13) Land claims & Northern Accord are key to establishing structure. Northern Accord must be settled on an interim basis & revised to adjust to land claims & self-government as they take form. Full aboriginal involvement in ratification must be in place.

(14) Community will determine the relationship between the First Nation government and municipal responsibilities.

(15) The federal government must maintain their bilateral relationship and fiduciary responsibility with First Nations.

(16) Elder/Peoples' Assembly must be established to advise all politicians

(17) Funding must be made available for a community to work on the implementation plan as recommended in the Bourque Commission.

Questions:

- What rights (individual, collective, aboriginal) should be recognized and protected in the constitution?
- Should a Social Charter be included, and if so, what should it cover?
- What governing institutions need to be recognized in the constitution (central, community, regional, aboriginal)?

Emerging Consensus:

(1) The community must be the basis of any new structure of government

(2) All 4 levels of government - community, aboriginal, regional and central - are necessary and should be entrenched

(3) The Constitution must recognize the individual and collective rights of all northerners

(4) The Constitution must recognize the collective rights of all aboriginal peoples

(5) There should be a statement of social principles as a goal for legislative policy

(6) There was strong support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Bourque Report on individual and collective rights and a Social Charter

Additional Ideas:*

(1) The Constitution must recognize the official languages of the Territories

(2) There is a need for an enforceable environmental charter

(3) The Constitution should accommodate a system of aboriginal justice

(4) There should be zero tolerance for violence

****The "Additional Ideas" were expressed by one or more working groups, but were not discussed by all Conference Participants. They are included here simply as additional ideas for possible consideration.***

WORKING GROUP #1

Regarding rights and a Social Charter, the Bourque Report is supported with respect to principles, with the following points to be added:

(1) The right to vote in municipal / local elections as per AWTBM positions;

(2) Recognition of collective, aboriginal and treaty rights in a Western Territorial constitution;

(3) "Code of Conduct."

(4) Clarify residency requirements for voting;

(5) An obligation to consider the effects of decisions on future generations.

(6) Government authorities should be as close to the community level as possible to ensure accountability.

(7) There should be an enforceable environmental charter and the constitution should be in "plain" language.

WORKING GROUP #2

(1) Aboriginal and treaty rights should be protected in the constitution as well as individual and collective rights.

(2) We should pursue a Social Charter as a future goal; We need a human rights code and a mechanism to enforce it.

(3) The community level is the most important.

(4) Aboriginal self-government should be recognized as an inherent right.

(5) Regional / district governments should be recognized with the central government having those powers delegated to it by the regional / community levels.

WORKING GROUP #3

(1) Inherent right to self government should be recognized as well as aboriginal and treaty rights for all aboriginal people.

(2) The overriding objective is to build a system of government which will protect the individual rights of all citizens and the collective rights of its aboriginal peoples - and whose overarching principle is one of bringing peoples together.

(3) A new Western Constitution must balance two principles: (1) protection of individual rights and (2) protection of aboriginal rights.

(4) A Social Charter based on that outlined in the Bourque Report should be included that:

(1) respects the needs of disabled persons;
(2) respects the needs of youth.

(5) Whether or not the Social Charter should be enforceable by the courts needs to be determined.

(6) Recognized governing institutions should be community, central, aboriginal and regional.

WORKING GROUP #4

(1) Individual, collective, & aboriginal rights to be recognized & accommodated in new Constitution.

(2) Content to recognize existing rights & provide for the capacity to add or enhance additional collective rights as identified by the peoples of the new western territory.

(3) Social Charter to be included. A new constitution should identify in a Social Charter the basic necessities required for the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical and economic well-being of all members of the new western territory society. (*As taken from the Bourque Report, April 1992, pg. 16*).

(4) Communities have the right to govern themselves locally, regionally or at the central level through forms of government (public and/or aboriginal) as they may best be served.

(5) There needs to be a disengagement clause so that aboriginal groups can opt into the process now as they know that they have way to opt out.

(6) Identification of what founding principles actually exist is a process which is still evolving.

WORKING GROUP #5

(1) We should reaffirm the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as rights arising from treaty claims and land settlements, and the inherent right to aboriginal self-government.

(2) Metis and Inuvialuit should be included in the definition of aboriginal.

(3) Aboriginal rights are rights in addition to equality rights.

(4) Need to differentiate between rights and privileges.

(5) Concern for rights of disabled people and children.

(6) Need for a Social Charter as a statement for social purposes.

(7) Provisions for governing institutions need to allow for flexibility for communities, regions, and groups to do as they need and wish.

(8) Need a referendum to adopt the new Constitution with agreement in each region.

WORKING GROUP # 6

(1) We should affirm the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the constitution, but capture its spirit rather than repeat it in detail.

(2) Individual and collective rights should be protected in the constitution.

(3) We need to recognize existing aboriginal rights and whatever additional aboriginal agreements are made for rights, benefits or powers through negotiations with the federal government.

(4) We need to allow communities to select organizations and governing structures that are most efficient and effective for their purposes.

WORKING GROUP #7

(1) Entrenched orders of government.

(2) Communities must be the foundation of any new government.

(3) Whatever institutions that are designed must be flexible.

(4) The transfer of powers from the GNWT to the communities must be speeded up.

(5) Aboriginal governments need to be recognized as an entity.

(6) We need some focus or principle to keep regional governments together.

(7) No one model can meet all needs.

(8) We should accept the Canadian Charter and the Bourque Commission's Social Charter (disabled persons rights, human rights code, traditional knowledge, aboriginal languages should be recognized as official languages).

WORKING GROUP #8

(1) Aboriginal rights must be recognized and entrenched in the constitution. We need to protect these rights:

- Traditional practices (we need to study the past);
- Recovering culture and language;
- The right to own firearms for hunting and trapping;
- The right to deport people or impose traditional justice at the community level;
- Dealing with healing and social issues;
- Spirituality has a role to play in controlling our lives;
- Protection of the environment;
- Women's rights.

(2) Rights have responsibilities and obligations.

(3) We have not reached a consensus on whether individual or collective rights are more important.

WORKING GROUP # 9

(1) Central government powers must be redefined and structures changed to accommodate stronger regional, aboriginal and community governments.

(2) The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms must be recognized.

(3) Collective rights must be balanced with individual rights.

(4) Aboriginal rights must include treaty, land claims, language, traditions, culture (see Bourque Commission).

(5) Social Charter rights should be stated as a principle in legislation.

(6) Political power should reside with communities and be delegated up to regional and central governments.

WORKING GROUP #10

(1) Individual, collective and aboriginal rights should be protected and recognized.

(2) Collective rights should, in some instances, take precedence over individual rights.

(3) A Social Charter should include rights for physically / mentally challenged persons, education, health care, elder's rights, children's rights.

(4) There should be zero tolerance for violence.

(5) Communities should be the first level of government.

WORKING GROUP #11

(1) The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms needs to be affirmed.

(2) Supports the Bourque Commission position on rights and freedoms.

(3) The rights of the youth needs to be affirmed.

(4) The collective rights of Metis need to be supported.

(5) A Social Charter is needed as outlined in the Bourque Commission's report and Women's groups reports.

Working Group #3, facilitated by Doug Bryshun (standing) discussing Government Structures and Powers.

WORKING GROUP #12

(1) Individual and collective rights need to be recognized.

(2) A statement of aboriginal and treaty rights must be entrenched in the Constitution.

(3) Minority rights must be recognized.

(4) An equality statement is needed which addresses colour, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

(5) The community is the protector of all rights.

(6) Language and cultural rights must be protected.

(7) A Social charter should be included.

(8) Community needs to be recognized as the first order of government.

(9) Central government is needed to set standards with regional and community governments adding details as necessary.

Questions:

- How should authority and responsibility be divided between the levels of government?
- What kinds of institutions are required at each level to exercise those authorities and responsibilities?
- What financial and human resources are needed?
- What considerations of cost and efficiency affect the division of powers and the kinds of institutions?
- What will be the relationship between public and aboriginal government structures?

Emerging Consensus:

(1) Basis for political power should reside in the community

(2) There is strong support for the recommendations of the Bourque Commission on structures and powers

(3) Communities should have the necessary financial resources to deliver a broad range of services

(4) Research is needed on probable costs of community and regionally based government

(5) Communities should have the power to form regional / district governments

Additional Ideas:*

(1) Democratic principles should be used to establish regional governments

(2) Flexible community government structures and processes should be permitted

(3) Residual powers should belong to the communities

(4) Use of recall should be considered

(5) Deficit financing should not be an acceptable instrument of public policy

****The "Additional Ideas" were expressed by one or more working groups, but were not discussed by all Conference Participants. They are included here simply as additional ideas for possible consideration.***

WORKING GROUP #1

(1) Public Government institutions should proactively seek involvement, participation or representation of aboriginal governments.

(2) District & community governments should be able to form their own constitutions within parameters set out in the western constitution based upon democratic principles.

(3) There should be a central level of government. This should not preclude the ability of the Deh Cho to pursue their proposal with the federal government.

(4) The Bourque Report concept of four levels of government (community, regional/district, central and aboriginal) should be accepted in principle as a starting point for discussion.

WORKING GROUP #2

(1) Decision-making should be as close to the community as possible.

(2) Community government should be the first level of decision-making and the basic unit of government.

(3) Responsibilities of government would be negotiated based on funding and the availability of other resources.

(4) The Bourque Commission statement about the distribution of powers should be the starting point for discussions.

(5) CDSC and the self-government negotiations are parallel processes and there may be areas where people need to work together.

WORKING GROUP #3

Structures

(1) There would be aboriginal, community, regional & central government institutions.

(2) Communities are the base of all levels of government.

(3) There could be exclusive aboriginal jurisdiction in limited areas of direct concern to aboriginal people.

(4) Communities would have the right to form regional governments, and the central government would be obliged to recognize and accept them.

(5) A number of issues must be considered including the method of deciding whether communities wish to form a regional government, methods and terms of establishing them.

(6) The structure and accountability of regional governments would be determined by member communities according to democratic principles.

(7) Regional government may have legislative authority delegated by the community or central governments.

(8) Fiscal requirements must be fair and adequate and include resources covering duties assumed from other governments.

Powers:

(1) District governments would be formed. A district government may be a geographic area of governments and may include one or more established communities of municipalities within its boundaries. District governments should together encompass the entire geographic region of the new western territory. A district must be a geographically contiguous area. Communities within the geographically contiguous area of a district can choose:

- To opt into that district
- To have their own district government recognized instead, or
- In the case of Aboriginal First Nations, they have the right to seek a direct link with the federal government:

(2) The right of Aboriginal First Nations to negotiate with the federal government regarding the geographic area of their lands, be recognized, and that it not be prejudiced by participation in the new western territory district governments.

Powers shall be distributed as follows:

(1) District governments may have the power to make laws and deliver their own programs rather than just administering central government programs.

(2) District government may have broad ranging powers including all powers not specifically assigned to the central government.

(3) The central government should be restricted to matters requiring territory wide standards and regulations

(4) Aboriginal and mixed aboriginal public governments may have different exclusive powers according to local circumstances

(5) The principle of asymmetry, or unequal distribution of powers, should be recognized as acceptable among district governments

(6) Districts should have the flexibility to be able to assume increased powers gradually and to temporarily assign authority to the central government at any time.

(7) The constitution should assure an equitable distribution of financial resources to each level of government

(8) District government may require more taxation authority, but there may also need to be limits on borrowing powers.

(9) The central and district government will have to harmonize fiscal policy and relations through negotiated agreements for sharing financial resources.

WORKING GROUP #4

(1) The cost implications of the division of powers is such a fundamental issue in developing a constitution that it is difficult to discuss this matter without having a financial costing available to help focus the discussion.

(2) Certain powers are simply not available to be distributed by virtue of existing Canadian law - Section 91 of the Constitution Act 1867, the Charter of Rights, aboriginal and treaty rights, and self-government agreements. Therefore, any discussion on division of powers must of necessity consider these first.

(3) The Bourque Commission is a good basis for the development of the structures and powers of our constitution.

(4) Powers should rest at the community level with a pragmatic view of cost effectiveness.

(5) Group would allow for three branches of government at all levels.

(6) Financial and human resource requirements have not been analyzed, and this must be done now to allow us to move ahead.

(7) Communities may opt to delegate power to another level of government based upon cost efficiencies.

(8) Cost of creating the government structure that will result from the constitution should not stop us from creating a new government, constitution & institutions.

(9) Good will and harmony are essential for creating a working relationship between public and aboriginal structures.

(10) The relationship between public and aboriginal structures will only be knowable when land claims and self-government agreements are completed.

WORKING GROUP #5

(1) Central government should have jurisdiction over Crown lands and resources (eg. royalties, land rental fees, etc.) Central government should also regulate resource development (eg. labour and environment).

(2) There should be a direct and ongoing fiscal relationship between aboriginal governments and the federal government.

(3) All levels of government (aboriginal, central, regional and community) should have the power to tax, but no level may duplicate an existing tax. A division of taxation matters should be negotiated by all parties. Taxes include direct taxation, fees, levies and licenses.

(4) Deficit financing should not be an acceptable instrument of public policy.

(5) The constitution should recognize and accommodate differences between regions. We have to develop formal mechanisms to achieve this.

(6) The community should select the representatives for the regional government. The central government should include an elected assembly, an executive and a judicial branch.

(7) The group acknowledges the Deh Cho position and nothing stated in the group's report is intended to reject or undermine their position.

WORKING GROUP #6

The group did not *specifically* address the questions. In addition, since parallel processes are now occurring, and treaty and self-government talks may set or reset the following conclusions of the group:

(1) A new "order" of government may result.

(2) There is an awareness and acknowledgement that there is going to be a continued need for central provision of services - whether by a GNWT type body or something else.

(3) We need institutions at the central, regional and community level (aboriginal too).

(4) The community is the source of power. Government at the community is the primary level.

(5) Communities should have the power to determine how, what and when services will be provided. Community government should set standards for services that are specific to the community's needs.

(6) Regarding regional governments, their power comes from the communities.

(7) Regional governments should distribute funds by means of block transfers to communities. Regional governments should have the power to deal directly with the federal government. Regional governments would also have the power to distribute resource revenue. Regional government should have first priority use of local and regional resources, but must be conscious of their obligation to share.

(8) A central government would also distribute block funding transfers, set standards for central items anywhere in the Territory and ensure a social charter.

WORKING GROUP #7

(1) Aboriginal self-government is a given inherent right to be recognized as a government body.

(2) Communities are the foundation.

(3) Some shifts in power have already occurred due to claims.

(4) The strength of a central government depends on the size and style of the legislature.

(5) The residual power resides at the community level if the central government has the tools to do the assigned job.

(6) Two levels of government are agreed to: central and community.

(7) Serious consideration should be given to The Bourque Report's recommendations on the division of powers.

(8) Following a division of powers, each level of government should have legislative power.

(9) Regarding the financing of new governments, the group needs more information before answering the questions raised by the CDSC.

(10) A lot more work is needed to define public government and self government bodies.

(11) How public and aboriginal government structures relate will have to be determined in the context of negotiations over the division of powers.

WORKING GROUP #8

(1) There should be a shift in powers; the question is, how big should the shift be?

(2) Communities should take responsibility (as they are ready) for making decisions about things like the design of housing, & health care delivery.

(3) Some in the group think that the power of the community or region should be more comprehensive over things like oil, gas, energy, minerals, diamonds, and other revenue generating capacities.

(4) This shift should happen over time, a slow shift, an "evolution of devolution."

(5) The central government should retain the power to regulate things that affect public safety, professionalism, intergovernmental affairs, etc.

(6) The key is, who gets the money from the land & resources & who controls it?

WORKING GROUP #9

(1) Powers should be divided along the lines of the list on p. 55 of the CDSC's summaries of "Member Group Reports" (the Bourque Report):

- Municipal infrastructure should include capital planning
- Land use (should be moved to regional)

Communities should have the power or authority and responsibility. They would have the option to give that responsibility to a regional collective of communities or to the central government. The constitution should empower communities to establish a regional order of government if they so wish. This approach would provide flexibility. (For example, present municipalities could remain as municipalities; communities could choose to amalgamate into a region)

(2) At the community, regional and central levels, there should be executive, legislative and judiciary functions, consistent with the authority and responsibility given in the constitution to the three levels of government

(3) We recognize the national and territorial fiscal realities. However, we believe that the structures we are suggesting will allow for unique community-based solutions. These solutions, including regional cooperation, would take advantage of efficiency and economic use of the financial and human resources available to the western territory. Further, there should be an independent evaluation of the costs and structures proposed by this conference prior to the next conference.

(4) The relationship between public and aboriginal government will range from no relationship to one where public and aboriginal government are one and the same. This relationship will be worked out at the community and regional levels.

(5) Have been asked by Deh Cho representative to say they are merely observing and we acknowledge their positions.

WORKING GROUP #10

(1) The flexibility has to be there to allow the community to develop its own type of government. People have to be able to identify the government that is going to work in their community. No centrally imposed model will work.

(2) Don't have enough information to make decisions on financial and human resources.

(3) Cost efficiency is important but it is not the only consideration. Peoples' needs and aspirations are often more important.

(4) *Central* policy and coordination needed in certain areas: central registry (statistics and vital statistics); corrections policy; economic development policy and coordination; educational standards; territorial elections; minimum environmental standards; financial; health policy; highways; inter-governmental affairs; justice (federal and territorial); labour standards; occupational health and safety; renewable & non-renewable resources; social services policy; taxation; tourism; workers compensation board.

(5) *Aboriginal government powers to include*: community government; communications; culture; educational standards; environmental control; health (traditional and professional); housing; language standards; renewable resources land; claims; self-government; social programs; tribal/regional development.

(6) *Regional government powers to include*: additional standards; capital planning; economic development; environmental control; health; legal services; legislative authority; mineral rights (issuance, benefits, royalties); public safety; policing; regional taxation; regional education; renewable resources; tourism; translation; health/legal; utilities

(7) *Community government powers to include*: bylaw enforcement; corrections; capital planning; communications; coroners & justice of peace; accountability; culture; economic development; education; elections; enforcement; environmental control; gaming licenses; housing; justice; licensing; local laws; local health delivery; municipal services and taxation; recreation; social problems; tourism; translation; health/legal.

WORKING GROUP #11

Group developed a list of the powers and authorities we would like to see divided among the three levels of government and a copy has been submitted in our notes:

(1) Group concluded that we need three levels of government: community, regional and central. The flow comes from the bottom (people) up.

(2) Community should be given significantly more responsibility for program delivery and decision making — as they feel comfortable to take on the responsibilities.

(3) Regional government role, in general, is co-ordination, planning and some program delivery. It was identified that regional government was not considered to be a necessary vehicle.

(4) Central government is largely legislative, fiscal negotiation, standards, and policy making.

(5) Public government & aboriginal government should be parallel & complementary.

(6) Whatever power structure is established has to be financially possible and fiscally efficient.

WORKING GROUP #12

(1) Funding should flow as efficiently as possible from the federal government through the central government to the community. Authority & responsibility then flow upwards to the region if a community decides to do so. This may mean regional government in some cases.

(2) The central government is responsible for protecting community authority and responsibilities. The central government is responsible for interfacing with the federal government.

(3) Provision must be made for structures that are working for the Dene and Metis, so everyone has a forum to meet and interface with the federal government. For example, structure - like Dene national and Metis nation - provide the Dene and Metis perspective. We are using the word everyone because the Dene believe all people should be included and considered if they live on Dene land.

The Dene want the non-Dene to be included in Dene government structure, and provide an opportunity for non-Dene to learn and live with our perspective.

(4) The settlement of land claims and the Northern Accord are key to establishing government structures.

(5) Communities will determine the relationship between the First Nation government and municipal government.

(6) The federal government must maintain their bilateral relationship and fiduciary responsibility with Aboriginal people - self government, treaty and land claims.

(7) A Peoples' Assembly (maybe an Elders' Assembly) must be established to advise all politicians at all governmental levels.

(8) Funding must be made available for a committee to work on the implementation plan as recommended in the Bourque Commission.

Questions:

- How should individual residents and groups be represented in government decision-making? (eg. aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, men and women)?
- Once the new constitution is in place, who must consent to future changes?

Emerging Consensus:

(1) Each region / district should establish its own basis for representation

(2) Provisions to encourage balanced representation of aboriginal and others are required

Additional Ideas:*

(1) Premier should be elected by the public at large

(2) Reducing minimum ages for voters needs careful consideration

**The "Additional Ideas" were expressed by one or more working groups, but were not discussed by all Conference Participants. They are included here simply as additional ideas for possible consideration.*

WORKING GROUP #1

(1) Constitution has to allow for guaranteed representation to be an option at all levels:

- Support it at district/community level
- Not comfortable making any decisions about guaranteed representation at central level, although generally agreed that aboriginal claimant groups should have it
- Need to see detailed proposals before we can discuss it further - what would it look like?
- Need to take it back to communities to discuss further

(2) Need to take a further look at residency requirements.

(3) What mechanisms can be established to ensure that decisions take into account impacts on future governments (eg. Senate, Council of Elders).

(4) Did not deal with question of amendments to the constitution.

WORKING GROUP #2

(1) Different representation formulas are appropriate for different levels of government.

(2) A concern to recognize the voice of the group, not necessarily the presence of this member of the group; an example of discussion is the Metis Nation on p. 44 of the green book with amendments; that people of the western territory need to understand the historical context of the issue of representation

(3) Could not reach a consensus concerning guaranteed gender representation

(4) This does not compromise or take away from the Deh Cho position.

WORKING GROUP #3

These are the points we reached consensus on:

(1) The principle of balanced representation must be determined in the development & processes of governing (i.e. aboriginal, non-aboriginal, men & women).

(2) Models for representation in governing require further study and discussion, but whatever form they take must reflect a balance among all cultures of the new western territory.

(3) Amendments to the constitution (or parts which address fundamental principles & objectives) must have the approval of aboriginal & non-aboriginal peoples.

WORKING GROUP #4

(1) Our summaries from both days were summarized to the point that our meaning was changed. This after we received assurance at the end of the second day that our summary would be reproduced word for word. That technicians would presume to change our meaning shows a total lack of respect that is simply not acceptable.

(2) Fundamentally support the idea that there can no longer be any system that allows for the disenfranchisement of any group of people. We want all people to be represented at all levels of government.

(3) Each community (district, regional) must make its own arrangements. The process must be developed in a democratic fashion. Traditional appointment process may be utilized by some.

(4) There is a role for some form of central government.

(5) No consensus: Central government must allow a significant say for aboriginal people otherwise there will be no incentive for aboriginal people to opt in.

(6) No consensus - There should be at least 50% aboriginal representation at all levels of government to ensure the long term protection of aboriginal rights. There is a contrary view.

WORKING GROUP #5

Principles

(1) Method of Representation: should be determined on a regional basis. The formula should consider three points:

- Population
- Number of communities
- Protected seats for aboriginal population

(Elect) - Flexibility

No consensus on other representation being guaranteed (i.e. women, disabled)

(2) Premier should have a broad public mandate (elected by public at large). General support with some reservations.

(3) Ratification Formula: Territory-wide referendum (say, 5 regions or aboriginal); majority of each region must consent in a referendum and there must be an overall majority.

(4) Amending Formula: Initiation: majority of regions working together could initiate a proposal for change to the constitution.

(5) Amending Formula: Approval: majority of each region must agree to the amendments, through a referendum. An overall majority is also required.

WORKING GROUP #6

(1) The desired goal is that all people are selected based on respect and the knowledge they will represent the people well.

(2) Each community would select representatives to the regional governments.

(3) Before 1999 - perhaps during future meetings such as this - community and regional organizations must decide how and who will be the representatives at the central government level.

WORKING GROUP #7

(1) Necessary to deal with alcohol problem, for people to participate & work together.

(2) No agreement on central government representation

- question of elected representatives vs. community/regional or other interest groups.

(3) No agreement on guaranteed representation. Would like "balanced" representation.

(4) Need for non-constitutional body, similar to Status of Women Council, that would address concerns/issues for elders, youth and disabled - a Minister should be appointed for these concerns.

WORKING GROUP #8

(1) Not unlike Group 1, we discussed guaranteed representation for the majority of our time as well.

(2) We affirm that there should be guaranteed aboriginal representation at the central and regional level.

(3) Many of us agree that there should be guaranteed aboriginal representation at the community level.

(4) We cannot agree about whether there should be guaranteed representation for non-aboriginal people at the community level.

(5) We affirm that we would like to see women play a greater role in society and in politics. The majority of us think there should be 50% guaranteed elected seats for women across all levels of government. However, some of us feel women should be free to advance without guarantees.

WORKING GROUP #9

(1) Our group could not come to an agreement on the issue of guaranteed representation of aboriginal groups at the central government level.

(2) There was group agreement on the issue of one vote, one person at the community level.

(3) The group could not come to an agreement on representation at the central government level based on population. A formula must be developed.

(4) The group could not come to an agreement on the issue of equal representation for women at the central government level.

(5) Agreement was reached that representations at the community and regional levels be determined at those levels.

WORKING GROUP #10

(1) Consensus that women are under-represented at all levels of government and that we should strive to achieve equality at all levels in present and future government.

(2) There were different suggestions as to how gender equality could be achieved but a consensus was reached that there should not be guaranteed representation by gender.

(3) From a general point of view it was also argued that there was not adequate recognition of and representation for certain groups such as the Metis at some levels of government. Generally we should try to achieve equal and adequate representation by these groups. However, as with the gender issue, this should not be achieved through guaranteed representation. We should explore other means such as boundary adjustments to help achieve this balance of representation.

(4) A distinction was drawn between central government and other governments. Although there should not be guaranteed representation at a central level, regions and communities should be free to develop models which are appropriate and acceptable to their regions and communities. For example, in the community of Aklavik, local government will be composed of representative chosen by the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and at-large. This should be permitted.

WORKING GROUP #11

(1) We focussed our discussion on representation at the central government as we think the regional and communities are the best ones to determine how representation will work at those levels.

(2) With regard to central government, we feel that constituencies need to be evaluated.

(3) We also think that there should be regional representation in central government.

(4) Lastly, we agree that there should be guaranteed aboriginal representation at the central government level and that elections should be by majority vote. However, we have a concern and would like clarification about how we can make guaranteed representation work in a democratic system where people are guaranteed a vote and the ability to run for office. As the work on this constitutional development continues we would like to see some models developed that also keep in mind simplicity and realistic financial resources.

WORKING GROUP #12

Agreed:

(1) We must leave it up to the community how leaders are chosen at the community level.

(2) We must work together to ensure as much as possible equal representation.

(3) Election to all individuals should be by clear majority.

(4) One person, one vote.

(5) All people including women must be encouraged to run for leadership.

(6) Constitutional change must be consented to by those people affected. For instance a particular community or aboriginal group.

Disagree & further discussion:

(1) 50-50 men/women representation & proportional representation to guarantee minority representation. Most disagree - needs further discussion.

(2) Guaranteed seats for recognized groups: if the people in that group elect them, i.e. the Metis; some agreement but need further discussion.

(3) Native people should represent white people at the community level in some communities — more discussion.

(4) Can guarantee representation through electoral boundaries - more discussion.

Questions:

- What are your group's views on the format and content of this conference?
- What steps do we need to complete the constitutional process and develop a new structure of government for the new western territory?

Emerging Consensus:

(1) It is imperative that progress be made on negotiations on land claims and self-government

(2) There is general satisfaction with the process and the outcome of this conference

(3) A second conference should be held within a year to deal with the text of a constitution

(4) Independent research is needed on cost of government, representation, etc.

(5) More public involvement regarding constitutional options is needed, particularly at the community level

Additional Ideas:*

(1) The next conference should be held outside of Yellowknife (e.g. Inuvik)

(2) The next conference should be more regionally focused (e.g.. regional working groups)

(3) Size of CDSC should be reduced to streamline the process

(4) A workplan is needed to involve youth in the process (e.g.. a separate youth conference)

(5) CDSC should support cultural efforts (writers, artists, musicians, videos) to bring out the constitutional process

The "Additional Ideas" were expressed by one or more working groups, but were not discussed by all Conference Participants. They are included here simply as additional ideas for possible consideration.

WORKING GROUP #1

Comments on the conference:

There needs to be better planning for the next conference such as:

- Choosing delegates farther ahead of time;
- Get materials out sooner;
- Hold community meetings to discuss issues;
- Hold regional orientation sessions for delegates;
- More involvement by youth.

The Next Steps:

- This conference should send a strong message - the top northern priority is to get aboriginal self-government process underway
- The CDSC structure is too big - we recommend it be downsized
- Information from this conference should go back to community level for discussion
- More research has to be undertaken in specific areas before another conference is held, including: (1) a technical working group to develop positions on division of powers and government structures, (2) options for guaranteed representation at various levels of government should be developed for consideration by communities and a future conference, (3) mechanisms to ensure that the interests of future generations are protected should be explored - some avenue to allow a "sober second look" at decisions (eg. a senate).
- CDSC needs to explore more proactive ways to get public input. CDSC should work more through local and regional groups to coordinate community visits.

WORKING GROUP #2

(1) We support the commencement of self government/ inherent right of self government. Negotiations to be concluded before the CDSC process concludes.

(2) The self government/inherent right of self government & the CDSC processes are equally important. Both must have sufficient resources to conclude their work.

(3) Aboriginal organizations are responsible for the negotiations of the self government / inherent right to self government process.

(4) The CDSC process should continue with consultations & follow-up work as directed by this first conference. A clear priority is to review the work done to date on division and to develop positions to ensure the western NWT does not suffer adverse financial impacts from division. How will we do this? Through CDSC/First Nations as directed by the communities. We must do this as soon as possible before 1999.

(5) The new constitution should be approved by: (1) consent of aboriginal First Nations before a referendum is held and, (2) the constitution is to be ratified by residents of the new western territory by referendum.

WORKING GROUP #3

The conference format and content were productive and educational.

Indian Affairs Minister Ron Irwin, in his opening remarks seemed to be limiting & thru this process we express a desire to be more creative and expect the Federal Government to acknowledge the on-going and concurrent process of both self government negotiations and a central government process.

Next Steps:

(1) Verbatim statements of summaries to be included in final report.

(2) Final report should be reviewed by group facilitators

(3) Final reports should be reviewed by communities using an objective facilitator to conduct discussions

(4) Time is of the essence

(5) CDSC should develop a communications strategy to provide all the information to all the people of the Western NWT (i.e. Gwich'in, Sahtu, Dene-Metis)

(6) People are the constitution - must be well informed and educated to understand their constitution

(7) Respect and support for the Deh Cho and Treaty 8 positions

(8) Realistic Constitution development deadline is 1997 - to allow for passage in the House of Commons

(9) Constitution drafting to be done by CDSC in partnership with technical experts, federal representatives, public assemblies, and elected leaders

(10) Draft should return to public for review and discussion before the next conference

(11) CDSC should maintain their role of leadership as a body of community leaders

(12) Federal government must begin immediately to pursue in good faith self-government discussions with aboriginal groups

(13) Idea of self-government structures is essential to finalize the form of a new western territory structure

(14) CDSC role in division should be involved to a greater extent in all matters relating to the division: (1) infrastructure, (2) fiscal policy, (3) implementation.

(15) The process of Constitutional Development should not be stalled, nor should it stall other parallel processes (i.e. self government).

WORKING GROUP #4

Views on format and content of the conference:

(1) We believe that there are five forms of government to consider in regards to this question: (1) federal (2) community, (3) aboriginal, (4) regional and, (5) central.

(2) The format is good but we need to ensure time for individual groups to caucus during the actual conference. This will allow for issues to be addressed and for some results to be realized.

(3) The conference presented a forum which allowed a consensus to emerge that all groups can support in principle the development of a constitution. The time is right to move forward from the Bourque Commission Report. We are willing to work together to do this.

(4) All individual participants in our group were asked what their expectations were and if they were met and after a general discussion it was agreed that all expectations had been met.

(5) Facilitators' notes were helpful to focus discussion. Morning Report was useful.

Next Steps to Complete the constitutional process:

(1) Progress needs to be made on aboriginal self government negotiations and the federal government must get working on this. Lack of clear progress on aboriginal self-government is limiting the CDSC constitutional development process.

(2) Recommendations of the conference needs to be put into a workplan so we can proceed to the next conference at which time we must have a draft constitutional document to consider. The content of the workplan must include, at a minimum, a complete analysis of the legal, constitutional, political and social consequences and is to consider cost and human resource implications of individual components of various models of government. The workplan must be distributed to the participants and to the CDSC membership for review and refinement. The draft constitution must also be widely distributed prior to the next conference so all parties have time to come prepared for a discussion of the draft.

(3) The work plan should address the express needs of youth to be involved in this process through a specific action plan. All schools should receive a module in this subject. There should be a youth conference during the days leading up to the next conference for the youth delegates to allow them to come comfortably prepared.

WORKING GROUP #5

(1) Public participation was healthy at this conference. The format and process worked. The content did justice to the work leading up to the conference. The conference leadership and organizers did a great job. We had great broadcast media coverage.

(2) What now? A report with a concise summary of principles that received consensus would be prepared that includes an enumeration of related ideas that need further consideration.

(3) In preparation for the next conference the working group should:

- Collect existing research and commission additional research into structures, function and finances for implementing the government for the new western territory.
- Research results must be made public.

(4) The next conference should focus on a practical implementation of the principles developed here.

(5) This conference made significant progress on concerns of both public and aboriginal governments. Continued progress on these parallel processes depends on support from both the federal and territorial government and an early commitment of support and money from both governments is essential.

WORKING GROUP #6

(1) CDSC should be reduced in size.

(2) The entire product from the conference should be detailed and presented to the public in a meaningful fashion.

(3) Pressure on federal government to proceed quickly with the self-government negotiations as that process has to run parallel with the public government moves - progress has been made on this side.

(4) There needs to be an on-going attempt to use visual media, television, multi language/artists.

(5) Materials from this conference would be distributed post haste.

Public Involvement

(1) Existing parties should remain involved and room should be made for more.

(2) For next conference we need a package that provides details & options on the consensus developed here & focus on that wider consensus is still required.

(3) Materials should be provided to participants with ample time to review.

(4) There should be a second conference in 1995.

Ratification

(1) To prepare the final document for ratification we recommend a constituent assembly with both elected and other representatives. Options to accomplish this should be prepared for the next conference.

WORKING GROUP #7

(1) The Bourque Commission Report should be tabled in the Assembly for further discussion.

(2) Need to reduce the size of the CDSC - reduce the number of MLAs, and better community representation.

(3) More detailed financial research & and more administrative options are required.

(4) There should be a compiling of the government representation models already developed for use as a reference and for education.

(5) More data / info which supports the education of participants in the process prior to the conference.

(6) Serious requirement for the self-government process to catch up to the CDSC process. We have affirmed it as a parallel process and it is now behind. The current CDSC should act as a resource to them.

(7) There should be a draft constitution developed prior to the next conference.

(8) Substantive progress must be made at the next conference.

(9) The next conference should follow the format where the working sessions are regional groups discussing in house. The plenary will act as a forum for the differing views, sharing of info, and hopefully, the defining of common ground.

(10) In the interim to 1999, the GNWT must be more sensitive to aboriginal governments.

(11) We have to, both the participants and government, pass what we have learned to the public.

The group view of the conference:

- The conference was well organized;
- The next conference should not be in Yellowknife - in an alcohol free community and using flexible starting times.
- Summary reports should be attached to the verbatim reports when distributed.

WORKING GROUP #8

(1) Next conference to bring in as many as possible of the same people so we don't have to start all over again.

(2) We should request the same level of funding which Nunavut gets so we do not get left behind. We should do this before September.

(3) It should be a priority for CDSC to see that the federal government begins to negotiate self-government with aboriginal groups before a further conference. They need to make enough progress for all regions and groups to feel comfortable with participating.

(4) Before devolution of powers from the federal government to the territory continues for regions with no land claim settlers, some interim measures are needed to make the regions feel comfortable and so there is less danger of losing local control.

(5) Some of us think it would be safer to allow for the devolution of some powers to the central level for the public interest since it will be easier for people to deal with a territorial power than to try to deal with the Government of Canada (eg. labour, prosecutions).

(6) Healing of communities to allow them to be ready to take responsibilities is critical. Adequate funding needs to be made available to locally designed and controlled healing programs.

(7) The constitution should be written in plain, simple, understandable, beautiful English, then translated into all of the official languages.

(8) Conference participants should have the opportunity to review & comment on the preliminary report. It should then be distributed to the public by March 1.

(9) CDSC should commit to develop a plan to involve youth more in constitutional process.

About The Conference:

(1) Being in the same small groups was good as we got to know each other like a family.

(2) Having a facilitator was helpful.

(3) The questions to focus on each session sometimes seemed off topic, given the content of the background materials.

(4) The wall charts & daily background summaries were helpful.

(5) Joe Clark did a commendable job. He should come back for the next conference, but we should have a northern co-chair.

(6) Corridors were smokey - the food was good.

(7) The mix of people in the small groups was good, the politician's involvement was good to give the process credibility. The aboriginal leaders involvement was good to let the public know what went on. The involvement of the public was good to make sure people actually do hear what went on.

(8) Next conference should be held somewhere other than Yellowknife.

(9) The no alcohol rule was excellent. Should have been no alcohol at the dinner sponsored by the City of Yellowknife.

WORKING GROUP #9

The conference:

(1) We found current format very effective and would like to see it continued. A sharing of positions which helped us all understand each other and find areas of common understanding. Working groups allowed for consensus building.

(2) We believe the selection process worked well, despite the short time frame.

(3) More information should have gone out to the delegates earlier

(4) More interpreters would be helpful.

Where do we go next?

(1) The federal government must begin immediate negotiations on self-government with aboriginal groups.

(2) The CDSC should retain its current membership.

(3) Conference results should be prepared as soon as possible and shared with all delegates and communities. This needs to be done in all western official languages and in a variety of means (ie. written, audio tape, video tape).

(4) Prior to the next conference, reports need to be prepared on issues including: (1) options on financing, (2) options for representation, (3) division information

(5) The next conference should be for further discussion on the constitution. Until there is more information on the above items and progress on self-government, there cannot be a draft of a new constitution.

(6) Conference delegates must assume responsibility for carrying the message back to their communities and collecting feedback. CDSC must prepare the conference result package for delegates to use in their communities. This will ensure a consistent basic message for all western Arctic residents.

(7) The delegates to the next conference should be the same as the delegates to the first conference. Where this is not possible (someone moves), the new delegate must be fully briefed on what has occurred to date.

(8) At the next conference, the makeup of the working groups should be as it was at this conference. The actual working group membership should remain the same, reducing the need to establish a working relationship among members.

(9) Next conference should take place within a year in Inuvik. Federal & territorial governments must make a financial commitment to supporting this process.

WORKING GROUP #10

Views on Format and content of this Conference:

(1) The conference went well - people felt that the conference was for them.

(2) In particular, chairperson, staff, facilitators were excellent.

(3) The timing, setting (Explorer Hotel, Prestige), excellent.

(4) Format (balance between structured and non-structured) excellent.

(5) Participant involvement / attendance, excellent.

(6) Delegate selection - identification/earlier notice/ public info could be better.

(7) Improvements in sourcing of services locally.

(8) Shortened orientation

Next Step:

Most important: The CDSC process should continue but:

- Progress on self-government in parallel must be achieved. Government has to address the inherent right to self government and there has to be progress for all aboriginal groups or the CDSC process will not be successful.
- The Constitutional Development Steering Committee needs to be more focused - ongoing work in terms of assets, financial transfers, delivery of services, other divisions, possible structures of government.
- Yes to public involvement.
- Timing of next conference - before or after election/ difference of opinion.
- Are there funds for continuation of the process?
- Yes to involvement of federal government.
- 1999 is a target we should strive for.
- Workplan: reports from the conference; review; CDSC directs technical working group to draft constitution; circulate drafts; conference with working groups to look at aspects ; ratification.

WORKING GROUP #11

Where do we go from here?

(1) Progress needs to be made in land claims and self-government so that the CDSC process and the other two can be parallel. We can't move ahead with CDSC and leave the other two behind.

(2) We suggest that the same delegates be brought to the next conference to maintain continuity.

(3) Have appointed participants from this conference be involved in the creation of the conference report to ensure accuracy.

(4) Before the next conference information is needed so that we can build on what we have done here. For example, we need cost studies and other models of guaranteed representation government.

(5) Need long term financial commitment from the federal government of this process.

(6) The six-person M.L.A. Committee on Division needs to report regularly to the public.

(7) We all have to go back to our communities and get others involved.

(8) Regarding the drafting of the final proposal, most of our group wanted to see an elected constituent assembly take on this job. Two of our group members wanted to see appointment for this role, rather than elections.

WORKING GROUP #12

(1) All groups involved at this conference and in this process should have an opportunity to comment on the conference and present new or revised position papers, including disabled people, visible minorities, and other groups missed in the selection process (reporter's own perspective). To ensure this happens, the conference report must be sent to all the participants so they can tell their constituent. We also believe it needs to be in a verbal / oral format (such as videos) as well as in written format.

(2) There should be a clear message sent from this conference that the federal government start the process of aboriginal self-government and that the territorial government supports this initiative. This process should be at the request of affected aboriginal groups as the Minister (Ron Irwin) stated earlier this week. Self-government should not be tied to central government or a public order of government, but should be a parallel process.

(3) The CDSC must develop a specific implementation plan for the western territories that will address issues such as operation and maintenance, capital costs, infrastructure. Any work on this plan will be given to the participants for discussion and available to the public prior to the conference.

(4) For the next conference, the final report must state what was present in working groups sessions, who they represented, and what their position was on the issues discussed - put in context.

(5) There needs to be more time to discuss each topic during the conference, but the overall conference could be shorter if the time is used efficiently.

(6) There needs to be more caucus time and free time (not for coffee) so that people can understand and get clarification on positions of groups.

(7) Languages need to be respected at the conference as they are all different and people have the right to use their own language when speaking in the conference and in the working groups as well. Concepts such as *process* and *principles* need to be explained orally in the aboriginal languages.

(8) Oral information (such as videos, tape recording, or radio) needs to be sent out or made available at the community level.

(9) When CDSC is visiting communities, they need to respect other people's agendas, specifically the process should not be politically driven. For example, you shouldn't have a meeting cancelled because the MLA can't make it.

Elder Alexis Arrowmaker: A Report from Group 7

The system of government and our way of conducting our affairs - it's possible to combine them compatibly. This land that we are talking about does not belong to us. It was made for us by the Creator and he put everything on it for our use, on the surface of the earth and sub-surface. He put every human being on it. When we speak about major issues and concerns, we must remember it. Without it, we will suffer.

Now, we have come here to discuss many issues; we are not talking for nothing, we are not laughing (not joking). We did not come here because we wanted our pictures taken for appearance on television; that is not why we came here. We are not standing up here for the sake of standing here. We want to do the right thing for our people. We are working for and representing all peoples. We cannot say that person is no good or that person has a bad attitude; we cannot say to each other that they should be excluded.

Aboriginal people and White people, we all live together. If we do not help each other what can we accomplish? It is by helping each other that we achieve objectives. So, now, myself, I believe that we can work well together. We can also easily have respect for each other: but sometimes that does not seem to happen. Even without being explicit about it, you know what I am talking about. It is just because of one thing that it is hard for us to be leaders. White People, Inuit, Metis, Dene People - we have the same problem. It is a thing to be apprehensive about. Without it, we will work well together. Here, now, we are saying we want to create one government; one day that is going to happen anyway. So if that government is created will it work well for us? If that government is in power, how many days, how many years will it be there for us? We have major communities with large populations and leaders will be chosen in those places. What will happen to people living in smaller communities? We think about all those things.

There are a lot of documents and you will assemble all the documents. Then a report will be prepared.

We cannot leave here without results. One cannot say, "I totally disagree with other people" because if we do not help one another we cannot do anything. If we say that we want to be one people then we will be strong. If not, then it will be difficult to gain strength. Living in different communities and regions, we, all people, the Metis etc., if we all help each other we will be strong. If not, it will be hard to be strong.

We are here and I am thankful. This never happened in the past; we did not do this in the past. We are here. We are saying let us rectify obstacles that cause problems.

One person spoke about voting and elections. He is right. When we are voting, the votes are counted and tallied differently. I do not think that is proper. When we vote, sometimes I think it is done right but proportioning votes on percentage basis is not right. When we vote for MLA's it is straight forward, when we vote for Chiefs it is done straight forward but sometimes when a vote is taken on a certain matter, the votes are tallied and proportioned on a percentage basis. Who's system and idea is it? I want this to be resolved for us.

According to government documents, once we establish self-government there will be conditions that forbid us from making decisions on Renewable Legislation (regulations). It has not been discussed. I think it would be good to talk about it. Yesterday when interpretation was done for me, this was what I said.

When we cannot agree on an issue or concern, the government appoints an arbitrator. Because of this process decisions are made for us and imposed on us. I am saying let us eliminate this process. I want this to be done away with because we do not deal with each other in this process.

Now, already they have discussed a lot of things that are now written down. Once the various groups come back with their reports, there will be a lot of discussion but here we will not be able to accept all group recommendations. The best and suitable ones will be selected and then perhaps a report will be made. Even group recommendations that are not accepted will perhaps be included in a report and when we meet again in the future, we will hear about them.

Elders played an important role in the conference

Whoever we meet with will hear about them.

They are also right in saying Aboriginal people will not be excluded from this process. For as long as the earth exists, we say that if the earth is not disturbed, the sun makes its circuit, the river flows and if nothing is disturbed then we will be dealt with fairly and united as in the past. We, the Aboriginal people, the Slaveys, Inuit are all to be treated equally and all are to be included as participants in the process. We shall not say, "Today, you care to be excluded".

When government comes into office they seem confused and talk to anyone. That is not to be. Without our knowledge and our being aware, they make legislation and regulations that forbid us from doing certain things. This causes anxiety for our Elders. This too is not right.

Tomorrow, we have Sunday ahead of us. We are not supposed to work on Sunday but it appears we have to work on Sunday - but it's good. Thank you.

We have government officials here listening to us. We are sitting with each other, with the Metis all other people together. We are listening and hearing each other so when we leave and go our separate ways we must say thank you. When we leave here, we must not say, "You have not spoken well therefore your words will not be listened to or accepted". Its as if we are one people and treated as one people - but the government must put aboriginal people first. They must not hold the aboriginal people in contempt; the federal government and the territorial government must put aboriginal people first.

When we have aboriginal - Dene government, the three levels of government must work well together. Whose words will we accept? The words of just one government cannot be accepted. When we have another government, the federal government cannot make policies that toss people about. When we have Dene Government, they must take into account the philosophy and thinking of the Dene, situation of the Dene on the land, their history, how they work and their words - they must take the words of the Dene into account on these matters. If we could work together that way then we will be thankful.

It is not easy living and going in this world. It is like when a house is built for us; the situation is comparable to our saying that the house is not built well for me. Let us not repeat that kind of a process. For the past twenty-five years since we started talking, it is as if the government was saying, "Your house is no good so you have to vacate the place". That is how they talk to us and it is not right. This land that we are living on is our house with use on the inside. It is our house that we are living in and we cannot be told to get out. When we are on our land it is like we are thinking that we have money in the bank. What can we do? We will not destroy it. Let it be that way in the future. If we are going to establish a government, if we are going to select a government, let us be careful and work well together. The government, aboriginal-Dene, the Inuit, the Metis and anyone else we have to work with, we will be thankful if we work well together and listen to each other; that is what we want.

When we meet it is nice to laugh and smile. It is not good to be in ill-humour when we meet. It is not an attitude to hold.

We will be here again tomorrow and we will be talking tomorrow, so if I have left out some concerns, there is tomorrow. We have talked about the role and concerns of women as leaders. We cannot exclude the youths. There will come a day when the youths will replace us. Youths are a great asset; they hunt enduring the cold. That too we cannot discount.

One day they will assume leadership so they must not be left in isolation.

Elders who are invalids due to sickness, blindness etc., are not well taken care of. It cannot be that way so that too we must be on the lookout for.

So tomorrow on Sunday, it will be good if God helps us to bring back a good message and good news to our home communities. If our Creator could help in that way we will thank each other from our hearts. The person sitting next to me has heard me so I will speak thus far to you. Thank you.

Conference Staff

Rt. Hon. Joe Clark
Conference Chairperson

CDSC Staff

Steve Iveson	Executive Director
Charles McGee	Assistant Director
Sharon Hall	Communications Director
Jeanne Gagnon	Office Manager
Laurie Sarkadi	
Lynda Comerford	
Jodi Woolam	

Prestige Planning

Darlene Mandeville
Conference Coordinator
Jeanette Mandeville

Canada West Foundation

Dr. David Elton
Dr. Peter MacCormack
Casey Vander Ploeg

Facilitation

Lynn Fogwill	Lead Facilitator
James Ross	Resource Staff
Joanne Deneron	Resource Staff

Constitutional Advisors

Beth Stewart	Lead Advisor
Bernie Funston	
Don Avison	
Tom Isaac	
Jim McConnell	

Closing Prayer: Gerald Antoine

God Our Creator, we have come together and have begun to be of the same minds alike at this meeting and the direction the talks have taken are in line with the words of our elders, which we have been carrying forward for so long.

The type of discussions that have taken place here are straight forward and complicated, it seems as though we have given things a push. I think we all feel we have accomplished this task today.

We agreed that we will work together on our objectives from today onwards and it is because of this, that we the people standing here said we support the decisions reached here. I feel happy in my heart because of this.

There are some things said here that people are afraid of. The non-native people living among us also feel this way. Please guide us so that we may live by what we have said today.

We ask that, you help those that are working for the people out of Ottawa to be of the same mind as us. We also ask that they be true to our words and their own words.

We have been meeting for seven days. We have talked with each other with feelings of the heart and mind, that's how we have become strong. We have come to understand each other, meeting in this community and I would like to pray for thanks. We would like to also pray for those, whose feelings of the mind and heart might have been hurt. We ask the Creator to look after them and comfort them.

Things have gone well here. I was asked to do the closing prayer by the conference organizers this morning and I felt honored. This is why I am standing here.

Among our communities and among us here, there are people, who are drawn to the use of alcohol. There has been many tragedies as a result of it, we ask the Creator for help. We ask that you (Creator) to help us abstain from it and that you guide us.

The women here, women from our communities spoke a lot on their own behalf. Women have suffered a lot in the past and I think of them. The youth, that spoke did very well and I respect them. They have also witnessed our words stating that we will work together on our objectives. We have to keep our children in accordance with what was said here; in teaching them, talking to them and helping them.

Joe, who has been playing the role of middlemand. He is a good man. He was talked about a lot by other leaders, who work for the people and he has not felt well in his heart. Today he is helping the natives and non-natives living in this part of the land. He was the middleman at the conference and he is happy with the outcome and so am I, people are also happy with the outcome of this conference. We ask the Creator to watch over him.

What we have done here is a benefit to us all. These are my prayers for today.

Máhsi (Thank you).

Joint Statement From Aboriginal Goverments

Prior to the closing plenary, a joint statement was prepared by various aboriginal governments outlining their views on the outcome of the conference. The statement was presented to conference participants by Mr. Willard Hagen:

The aboriginal governments are encouraged by the constitutional conference which supports the importance of the media substantive and negotiations of self-government, land claims, Treaty 8, and entitlement based on the inherent right taking place as a parallel process to the continued activities of the Constitutional Development Steering Committee.

The aboriginal governments would like to emphasize conference support for the following:

(1) Negotiations will be based on the inherent right;
(2) Negotiations will not be limited to the public process.

The Minister of Northern Development and Indian Affairs has now confirmed the Government of Canada's willingness to negotiate this conference supports efforts in this direction.

In addition, representatives of the aboriginal governments have asked that the CDSC meet immediately to develop a work plan which will include their involvement in the process of division leading to 1999, and in particular, the negotiations to divide the budget and assets of the current administration.

The people of the Western Territories have spoken with one voice, recognizing that aboriginal self-government is a parallel process to the CDSC that must be recognized as a priority item in the western territory.

The conclusion of this conference is that substantive negotiations on aboriginal self-government must begin immediately. We therefore urge the minister of DIAND to respond to the wishes of all the people of the western territory and commence negotiation. Progress on this critical matter will enable the West to develop a comprehensive process prepared for division in 1999.

Selected Quotations

(George Cleary, Sahtu)

"We have to congratulate the women who have come here, the youth who have come here, the elders who have come here, the mayors, the people who represent people from the normal walks of life, the people from the street. We have seen people in all the groups - in all the different workshop discussions - apply themselves very seriously to come up with direction for our people as a whole. It is something that we have not seen in a long time. These kinds of facts give us a lot of hope for the future."

(Roy Erasmus, Treaty 8)

"...I would like to state that we are quite pleased with the emphatic statement that has come out of this process - and that is - that aboriginal self-government is not to be negotiated through the CDSC process. That was the statement that we were attempting to give to the Government of Canada as well as other people when we made a rather dramatic statement at the beginning of this conference. But some of us stayed behind and observed in groups and it was a really good experience for myself and others to see how the non-aboriginal people came to understand our situation and understand that the CDSC process can't go on properly unless self-negotiation progresses on a parallel process. The Treaty 8 Chiefs will be meeting next week and will be reviewing some of the results from this conference and deciding our further - our future - participation in the process."

(Charlie Furlong, Aklavik)

"I repeat what the Minister said the other night. He said he's willing to move when we are, and he also mentioned that there is a window there that we should take advantage of. Well, I want to take advantage of that window, but sometimes the third level of government - the bureaucracy - creates a pretty tight screen for anything to go in or out of that window."

(Dennis Bevington, Mayor Fort Smith)

"I'd like to say today that I'm very pleased with what...has happened here. I think that in conversations with the mayors of the Northwest Territories and [the] western Arctic, we all feel good about this conference and the results of it...I don' t think it's an event that sprung like a flower in four days. I think it's something that comes from years and years of people working together in communities, working together as a group in the western arctic - not always working together, sometimes working apart, sometimes disagreeing - but over the years, coming to respect and understand the others and coming to recognize that our society up here is multi-facetted. It is exciting and unique. Let's move ahead carefully. Let's move ahead with assurance."

(Alphonsine McNeely, Fort Good Hope)

"I know that as women, we were made from man's rib, so...I'd like the men to recognize that we have to work side by side...the women in the community, I'd like them to know that as women we have to accept ourselves...for who we are and have to respect our men. In the same way, the men have to respect us as women in the community."

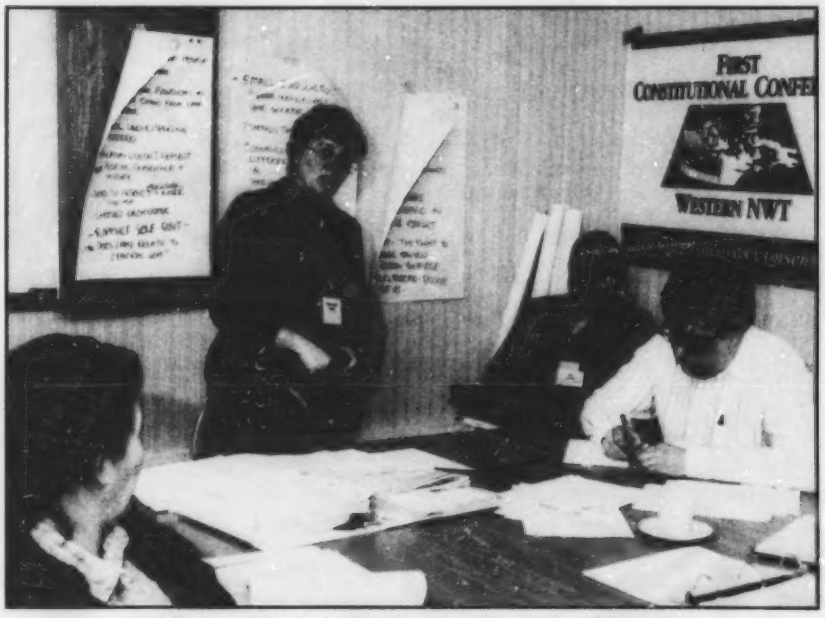
(Everett Kakfwi, Fort Good Hope)

"I want to thank the people that I disagreed with. It's opened my eyes to a lot of things. I think in the end, we all agreed that we want to be the drivers. It's going to be a long, hard road - like the Sahtu winter road - but if we all drive together, I think that we're going to get there."

(James Ross, Fort McPherson)

"I never thought I'd see the day or where I'd see myself enjoying working with white people...I made a remark the other day. If I knew it was that much fun working with white people, I would have done [it] a long time ago."

Full transcripts of the closing plenary statements are available from the CDSC office in Yellowknife.



Conference Chair, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark (2nd from right) circulated among Working Group sessions to hear the discussions.

(Grace Blake)

"Once [we came] into the non-aboriginal society, we were spoken to and spoken at. There was no dialogue. And obviously, in that kind of a situation, once we start speaking, all the negatives come out.

We sacrificed a lot to be part of this process, and yet we've gained a lot...We are finding that balance between the non-aboriginal and the aboriginal and in that balance we will progress. Our families will progress and our individual right as a human being will be excelled to the highest limit. And for that honour, I thank you."

(Gary Gee, Yellowknife)

"If anything I've learned here, it's from the elder in my workshop - Paul - who was just up here speaking. He said you have to speak from the heart. But he also said that we are one people, and I really believe that - you know - red, white, yellow, brown..."

(Gina Dolphus, Deline)

"When we gather together with our group, we disagree, we get mad at each other, sometimes we just want to get up and leave. The reason why we stay together is because we want to work with each other."

Conference Participants

WORKING GROUP #1

Facilitator: ARGUE, Marsha
Notetaker: DELANCEY, Debbie

Participants:

BLONDIN-ANDREW, Ethel	Yellowknife
COURNOYEA, Nellie	Tuktoyaktuk
ELANIK, Florence	Sachs Harbour
KURSZEWSKI, George	Fort Smith
NAYALLY, Joseph*	Wrigley
NORWEGIAN, Yvonne	Jean Marie River
O'BRIEN, Chris	Yellowknife
PAULETTE, Michael	Yellowknife
PRPICK, Luke	Yellowknife
RABESCA, Joe	Rae-Edzo
ROWE, Jack	Hay River
SIMPSON, Bob	Inuvik
T'SELEIE, Brenda	Fort Good Hope

WORKING GROUP #2

Facilitator: CAIRNS, Rosemary
Notetaker: LAPORTE, Pierre

Participants:

ANTOINE, Gerald*	Fort Simpson
BEAULIEU, Violet	Fort Resolution
BUGG, Vincenta	Yellowknife
ERASMUS, Roy**	Yellowknife
FORBES, Tom	Fort Smith
GROENEWEGEN, Jane	Hay River
HOEFER, Tom	Yellowknife
KOE, Fred	Inuvik
KRUTKO, David	Fort McPherson
TOURANGEAU, Larry	Norman Wells
TURNER BECK, Jenny	Yellowknife
WAHSHEE, James	Rae-Edzo

WORKING GROUP #3

Facilitator: BRYSHUN, Doug
Notetaker: NICOLL, Mark

Participants:

BOHNET, Gary	Yellowknife
BROOKS, Bob	Yellowknife
DILLON, Eddie	Tuktoyaktuk
GROSSETETE, Kurt	Fort Simpson
HARRINGTON, Paul	Hay River
HOPE, Eva	Fort Liard
JACOBSEN, Georgina	Tuktoyaktuk
LITTLE, Lois	Yellowknife
NERYSOO, Richard	Fort McPherson
PRICE, Julian	Hay River
RABESCA, Joyce	Rae-Edzo
TANITON, Raymond	Deline
TESOU, Fred*	Nahanni Butte

WORKING GROUP #4

Facilitator: COOPER, Lynn
Notetaker: HEDBERG, Ann

Participants:

BARDAK, Lydia	Yellowknife
BLESSE, Di Ann	Lutsel K'e
CADIEUX, Richard	Enterprise
FABIEN, Frank	Hay River Reserve
FRASER, Roger	Yellowknife
INUKTALIK, Adam	Holman
KAKFWI, Stephen	Fort Good Hope
KISOUN, Ria	Inuvik
MCLEOD, Willy	Fort Liard
MILLER, Dusty	Yellowknife
WALLBRIDGE, Garth	Yellowknife

WORKING GROUP #5

Facilitator: HERON-HERBERT, Sue
Notetaker: BLACK, Gary

Participants:

BOUVIER, Anne*	Fort Providence
CHICOT, Lloyd*	Kakisa
COE, Marie	Yellowknife
HUBERT, Ben	Yellowknife
NORWEGIAN, Leo	Fort Simpson
SUTHERLAND, Sister Agnes	Fort Smith
WILSON, Tom	Fort Simpson
ZOE, Henry	Rae-Edzo
ZUBKO, Tom	Inuvik

WORKING GROUP #6

Facilitator: KOZACHUK, Allan
Notetakers: MANDIN, Dan
COLPITTS, David

Participants:

AMOS, Joey	Inuvik
ANTOINE, Jim	Fort Simpson
BEAULIEU, Brenda	Rae-Edzo
BEVINGTON, Dennis	Fort Smith
JEREMICK'CA, Charlie	Wah Ti
KAKFWI, Everett	Fort Good Hope
MCDONALD, Ben	Yellowknife
NYULI, Greg*	Fort Providence
RABESCA, Bertha	Rae-Edzo
SULLIVAN, Deb	Inuvik
VAN LOON, Piet	Fort McPherson

WORKING GROUP #7

Facilitator: O'REILLY, Kevin
Notetaker: OVERVOLD, Charles

Participants:

BALLANTYNE, Michael	Yellowknife
BEAVER, Eileen	Fort Smith
BROWN, Jim	Norman Wells
DUSCHESNE, MaryAnne	Yellowknife
GON, Henry	Rae Lakes
HAGEN, Willard	Inuvik
HARDY, Rick	Fort Norman
JUDAS, Joseph	Snare Lake
SMITH, Kenny	Fort Smith
STORR, Evelyn	Aklavik

WORKING GROUP #8

Facilitator: TOMPKINS, Kate
Notetaker: O'KEEFE, Kevin

Participants:

ARBEAU, Arliss	Hay River
BABICKI, Charlotte	Yellowknife
CARMICHAEL, Dolly	Inuvik
FIRTH, James B.	Inuvik
GILDAY, Cindy	Yellowknife
HARDISTY, Gabe*	Wrigley
KUPTANA, Robert	Inuvik
LEWIS, Brian	Yellowknife
MCCALLUM, Chris	Fort Smith
MCNEELY, Alphonsine	Fort Good Hope
ROSS, Lucy	Tuktoyaktuk
SPERRY, John	Yellowknife

WORKING GROUP #9

Facilitator: McCANN, Dave
Notetaker: SPARLING, Gabriella

Participants:

ALEXIE, Robert Jr.	Fort McPherson
COCKNEY, Cathy	Inuvik
DENT, Charles	Yellowknife
DOLPHUS, Gina	Deline
ELKIN-HALL, Lynn	Yellowknife
GARGAN, Sam	Fort Providence
KOLSON, Bren	Yellowknife
LAWS, Ian	Norman Wells
MARION, Dan	Rae-Edzo
MILTENBERGER, Mike	Fort Smith
SIBBESTON, Randy*	Fort Simpson
TEDDY, Vince	Tuktoyaktuk

WORKING GROUP #10

Facilitator: MARY McCREADIE
Notetaker: ROBERT HAY

Participants:

ALLEN, Bertha	Inuvik
ANTOINE, Kele	Fort Simpson
DOCTOR, Lorraine	Fort Norman
DOUGLAS, Sholto	Rae Edzo
FURLONG, Charles	Aklavik
NEWMARK, Russell	Tuktoyaktuk
NIDER, Debbie	Yellowknife
NORWEGIAN, Herb*	Fort Simpson
POLLARD, John	Hay River
SUTHERLAND, Don	Fort Smith
WHITFORD, Tony	Yellowknife

WORKING GROUP #11

Facilitator: STEWART, Elaine
Notetaker: HOLMAN, John

Participants:

BECK, Dianna	Yellowknife
BLAKE, Grace	Tsiigehtchic
CLARKSON, Peter	Inuvik
CLEARY, George	Deline
CUERRIER, Daniel	Yellowknife
FELIX, Emmanuel Sr.	Tuktoyaktuk
LATOUR, Vicki	Hay River
MARIE-JEWELL, Jeannie	Fort Smith
MELNYK, Max	Norman Wells
WILLIAMS, Ron	Yellowknife

WORKING GROUP #12

Facilitator: LEGAT, Allice
Notetaker: RAEMER, Zoe

Participants:

BROOKS, Lynn	Yellowknife
BROOKS, Steve	Hay River
GEE, Gary	Yellowknife
GRUBEN, Roger	Tuktoyaktuk
JEROME, Sarah	Fort McPherson
KOCHON, Richard	Colville Lake
LAFFERTY, Richard	Fort Providence
LOVELL, David	Yellowknife
MENACHO, Victor	Fort Norman
MORIN, Don	Fort Resolution
TETSO, John	Deline
WRIGHT, Paul*	Fort Norman

*Deh Cho observers
**Treaty 8 observers

Concluding Remarks: Conference Chair, Rt. Hon. Joe Clark

This conference and its deliberations and results are going to be discussed and debated perhaps not always with unanimity in every community of the northwestern territory in the days and weeks to come. Indeed, thanks to extensive television coverage, many of the proceedings have been viewed in the communities as we have gone along.

I want to offer two perspectives about what has gone on here this week. First, it's a tremendous step forward that it happened at all. Consultation in the communities is common in the north. I venture that it is less common, indeed even highly unusual, to bring participants from all communities - this mix of people from leadership to grassroots - together in one place for almost four days of intense discussion in several languages. So, the opportunity to get together and learn about one another in this way is itself remarkable. The courteous, respectful and understanding conduct of your deliberations could, I tell you very seriously, be a model for southern Canada and far beyond.

The second observation takes me back to something that I said at the very outset last Wednesday. This is neither a beginning nor an end to the development of a constitution and government structures for the western territory. It is a step along a road that has been travelled for a very long time and whose end we have not yet reached. But let me suggest that in this few days, we have taken a very large step.

On the basis of the discussions earlier, the CDSC will be considering where we go from here in the process. In a few moments, I will be handing the conference back to Fred Koe as chairman of the CDSC, and I know that he and the other members have heard what we all heard today. What I heard was that you want to continue down this road on the same bus that has carried us through this week. This means a continuation of the consultation and probably another conference.

As I said yesterday, we will find that April 1, 1999, comes upon us very quickly and there is not a lot of time to lose. I want genuinely to thank all the participants for the dedication and the infectious energy that you brought to this conference. And I want to thank the CDSC staff, without whose strong and very competent support, I could not have carried out my role in the chair.

I have to say I've been involved in a lot of conferences and I must say that I can't think of a conference in which the organization and the preparation has been not just more efficient - because efficiency is one thing - but what struck me about this was how sensitive it was to the realities of the diverse communities that we are dealing with. There is no doubt that what made this work was the attitude of the participants, but it is also very clear that the way in which this [conference] was developed and organized contributed very significantly to the success of our deliberations. I think that the people who are at the heart of the organization should take a great deal of satisfaction from their success in the way that this has been put together.

By extension, of course, my thanks and appreciation go to the facilitators. I thought they were very, very effective in what they were doing and I share the commendation of James Ross and others who had a chance to benefit from the facilitators. I want to thank the notetakers, the transcribers, the interpreters, and the army of northerners who made this happen.

If I could, I would like to extend a special thank-you to the young pages - the students who sat so patiently at our sessions, who were ready and willing to do so many helpful chores. They were true volunteers. Now of

Rt. Hon. Joe Clark summarizes some of the key findings of the conference

Conference participants broke into working group sessions like this one to discuss each topic in detail. Deh Cho Grand Chief Gerald Antoine on the right and CDSC Chair Fred Koe at left of large chart.

Facilitators like Allice Legat (standing) helped the 12 Working Groups to share ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

course, they were offered the choice of going to school or coming here, and we all understood the choice that they made. But we appreciate very much the help that they gave us.

And last, but not least, I want to thank you, the participants. You are on your way to being a very constructive part of the history of the north. As I sat in the reporting plenary meeting yesterday afternoon, and I kept hearing participants use words such as warmth and understanding and goodwill and balance to describe their feelings about what had gone on this week, I was particularly moved when someone said the people felt the conference was for them. It was for them, and for you and for all of the people in the western territory.

As I say, the spirit in which you conducted yourselves offers real lessons for the rest of our country. When I leave later today, I will be taking south with me, the wisdom of the elders, the very real enthusiasm of the young people, the tolerance and the understanding of all of you. The ultimate success of your constitutional efforts here can send an eloquent message to the rest of Canada where there has been less than success in the past.

Now, this ends my role at the conference. We are going to move here from the blue blazer to the buckskin jacket, and as I hand proceedings back to Fred Koe, I just want to wish to all safe travel home and to say thank-you for the honour of having served as your chairman.

Concluding Remarks: CDSC Chair Fred Koe

Rt. Hon. Joseph Clark, Premier Nellie Cournoyea, CDSC members, our elders, our youths, all you participants, observers, staff and other people that are listening or watching what's going on this week.

I'm honoured this morning to try to wrap up what we've done this week and I probably will have to reiterate a lot of the thank you's that you've already heard, but as chairman of the CDSC, I think that it's my role to try to pull it all together. This conference has brought 150 of us together from all the 34 communities scattered along our big river that links all, the Mackenzie River, which to most of us is our northern highway. And we've been travelling along our river, working towards consensus. Many of us travelled a great distance to be here. And at this first constitutional conference as we talked about our common future together, I think we've travelled a considerable distance further. Not only in our hearts, but in our understanding of each other. We also travelled distances bridging the gaps in our language and our cultures and at the community outlook of our strongly held beliefs. Our means of travel has been our willingness to enter into this process in the spirit of goodwill, to be open to ideas, different from our own and to respect those differences without fully compromising our own values. For me, it's been a real honour to share this journey with you. As your driver on this journey, my job has been made very easy because I've had a very good team to work with.

I want to thank all of you for all your hard work, for the time that you've taken away from your families and from your regular life to contribute to this process. I would particularly like to thank our elders for sharing their wisdom and thanks to our youth delegates for reminding us that what we're doing today is also about tomorrow and our future. I'm grateful to the people that opened each of our sessions with prayers. I think it gave each of us some serenity and guidance in our deliberations. To bring a conference like this together takes a lot of planning, a lot of creative thinking and just plain hard work. There are many, many people that helped make this happen.

First of all, I'd like to thank the people of Yellowknife for hosting this conference and putting on the dinner and the dance the other night. Next, the Explorer Hotel, we want to give them a big thank you. You've looked after us very well. There was a lot of talk about the preservation of language and culture at this conference, so I'd like to recognize and acknowledge the hard work of our aboriginal language interpreters. We give them a big hand. I think they've helped us to understand each other and are also helping to keep those languages alive.

I want to also thank the two French interpreters who came here on very short notice from Montreal. They helped keep our Francophone population informed and part of this conference. Also, through our cable parliamentary channel broadcasts in English and French we made sure that all the rest of Canada understood and could see what we have accomplished here this week. As was mentioned, the pages that took time out from school to help, to them - thank you. There are also many businesses that helped pull this conference together. In particular I'd like to thank Canarctic Graphics, Inkit, Northern Repro, Creative Paper, and NorthwesTel, who did a lot of extra things and came through and responded on many last minute requests. Our television and sound crews and our northern media have also helped to bring our ideas to people across the North and to Canada. They worked late after we were all gone each day to make it happen and to them thank you, especially the TV productions that happen daily. I'd also like to give a big thank you to Jeff Pitre, President of PIDO Productions. Jeff was very professional in providing the audio. Thanks for thinking of what we might need before we even thought of it, and for going well beyond the terms of your contract.

Our means of travel has been our willingness to enter into this process in the spirit of goodwill, to be open to ideas, different from our own and to respect those differences without fully compromising our own values.

I'd also like to express my thanks to Ron Williams of Mackenzie Media who carried live broadcasts on Channel 17 here in Yellowknife and to the partners of TVNC and especially the Government of the Northwest Territories who loaned equipment and gave us the broadcast time, so that we can bring this conference to our people in our home communities. I also want to thank David Elton and the staff of Canada West Foundation who worked well into the nights after our sessions were over to get the morning reports out.

Another group of people which I don't think I would survive without as mentioned earlier this morning, is the CDSC staff. In the last two weeks, that staff grew from four people to forty people. To our notetakers who all managed to scribble and type to try to keep up with the lively discussions that took place in each session in each group session. I'd also like to thank Beth Stewart and her team of legal advisors for their help during the conference. And I'm sure that they know that their real work in terms of legal drafting is just beginning. Our office staff, Jodi Woollam, Lynda Comerford and Laurie Sarkadi all pitched in and did what was needed despite missing meals and the long hours and the general chaos in the days leading up and

throughout this conference.

After spending the last six months missing weekends, working long hours, working late into the night and travelling, I'd like to ask each of you to give these people a good round of applause: Steve Iveson, please stand. Steve, his Assistant Director, Charles McGee, our Communications Director, Sharon Hall, our Office Manager, Jeanne Gagnon. When this conference started, they moved into the hotel, and they've been putting in 20, 21 hours a day, to keep this operation going. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention the CDSC members, the CDSC Steering Committee for the past two years has been working towards this day - lots of meetings, all at their own expense - until we got a cheque from the government a few months ago. And they in turn, appointed myself, Gary Bohnet, and Pat McMahon as their executive committee to carry out their directions and I really appreciate the directions that they gave us and their input into this conference. Gary, as our deputy chairperson, worked tirelessly and I really support and wish to acknowledge his knowledge and support in this process. A few other members on the committee which deserve recognition for their input and work are Steve Kakfwi, Charles Dent, Jim Antoine and George Cleary. They went out of their ways, cancelled other meetings, did some travelling to pull this process together, and I'd like to give them a big hand.

Another key person in our co-ordinating committee I'd like to acknowledge here is the head of Prestige Planning. Without her, I think we'd still be all back in our communities and there would have been no conference. Darlene and Jeanette Mandeville worked tirelessly. They had endless patience to get us through our first round of community meetings. Once that was finished, they began to organize everybody's trips here to Yellowknife. They dealt with endless schedule changes, sometimes within minutes and normally within an hour, in trying to get our airline tickets changed, our hotel reservations changed and so on and so forth. And they're the ones that pulled this whole conference together. I would like now to ask Darlene to come up and present her with a small token of our appreciation on behalf of all of you. Darlene... (presentation made)...

As was mentioned by James Ross, all of you were participants in this conference. You all were assigned a working group and in each working group, we had a notetaker and someone to take charge, our facilitators. All our facilitators are northerners and they each come from wherever they came from with certain view points and ideals. But they showed us their professionalism and set aside their own personal ideals to help all of us get to understand each other and to deal with the issues that were before us. They did their job well, kept things on schedule and managed, most of the time, to keep discussions focused and within the time frame allotted to them. They were up against an enormous challenge. We had a person that co-ordinated the facilitators, the notetakers and the resource people. That individual was Lynn Fogwill. She put in longer hours, she had to eat the stale sandwiches or didn't eat at all, and then after all that she had to get up at 7 a.m. for morning breakfast meetings. We're thankful for you Lynn and I'd like to present you with a small token.....

Almost all of our notetakers, and the facilitators, are government employees. Their supervisors gave them time off to participate in this. Many of you are also government employees and were given the opportunity to come and join us at this conference. I'd like to thank both the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories for their full support in this effort. I'd also like to thank the Government of the NWT cabinet members, including their Premier for their participation in the group conference and the group sessions and their involvement in this conference.

I would now like to thank our conference chairman, the Rt. Hon. Joseph Clark, and his assistant, Jock Osler who was here providing support not only to Mr. Clark but to all of us. As for Mr. Clark, some of you heard about his abilities during the Charlottetown talks, where his experience and his abilities to grasp and articulate aboriginal concerns brought a balance to the proceedings. Mr. Clark was chosen because of his experience, his statesmanship and the respect he earned during that process. Here in Yellowknife during this week, he chaired with warmth, with fairness and with humour. Mr. Clark said that when he began, he did not want to bring us to an artificial consensus, but to try to help us find one consensus if it was truly here. I believe he's helped us to achieve those goals. He's demonstrated his versatility and proved that he's a man of many dimensions, especially when he showed us a new jigging step. At this time, I'd like to present Mr. Clark with a few northern mementos for his participation in this conference.

Finally, I know it's been a long morning, I want to thank all of you. All of you as participants, as observers, all our resource people for taking part this week. The job of organizing has been made easier because of your contributions and your participation in this conference, and I hope you all enjoyed yourselves as much as I enjoyed myself. We've come a good distance in this journey and we've taken several major steps together towards consensus, towards developing a new form of government that we all want. We are not at the end, but at the crest of a new horizon and hopefully we can see those goals and our destination a little more clear. Let's keep working together, let's keep helping each other, so that we don't lose the momentum that we've started

this week. At this time, I'd like to ask several of our elders to come forward and we'll close with a prayer song. Mr. Paul Wright from Fort Norman and Mr. Victor Menacho from Fort Norman have offered to perform the prayer song for all of us. Can I ask them to come forward?

Elder Paul Wright and Victor Menacho closed the conference with two drum prayer songs.

Elder Paul Wright, Fort Norman

As native people, when we play drum, it is a song for us, and that is why we are going to sing this song, so that we can think about each other and that is why this song is there for us. It's like it sings to us, gather each and listen to each other. Be together and be happy and work with each other so that you can be guided through the right path. When we speak in our language, it is something very special, and this is the song I'm going to sing. As we sing this song it's like we ask for help. So we're going to sing for you now. There are all different people here and I want you to hear this, so I'm very thankful that you are going to be listening to us. This came since 1946, and it's from the Mountain Indians, and Paul Andrew - his grandfather and us - it's our song. It's like our grandmother, and so, when you talk with each other, that is very wonderful, so we're going to sing for you. There is two songs.

Paul Wright

What we are doing now, is that if we don't fix ourselves we cannot fix anything. This is how it is, so I would like to thank the people today. It's going to be a long time before we get back to each other, and I am very thankful. The song that we are going to sing now, that means we are coming to the end. When it comes to that point, there is a prayer that we sing to our people, - we sing for people that have finished on this earth and we guide them through the next world so now that we're finished here, this will guide you. Think about it.

Elder Victor Menacho

I would like to thank all the people from the bottom of my heart. You are like at the palm of my hand. I want to think about you. I hope you travel home safely. Don't change anything that you have said here and think about each other. I would like to thank you and I hope that the Creator guides you home safely. Thank you.

Elders Paul Wright and Victor Menacho closed the Conference with two drum prayer songs.